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PALACE

ADBOUR

1789









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TRUE AND FALSE.

*"It is better to be the children of our Father in heaven than the servants of an earthly king," said Manon.*

*Page 137.*





T. NELSON AND SON  
London, Edinburgh, and New York





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*Page 137.*



IN  
PALACE AND FAUBOURG



*"O father! leave vengeance to God."*

*Page 50.*

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IN  
PALACE AND FAUBOURG

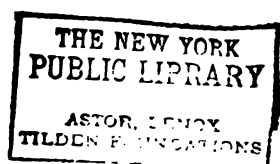


*"O father! leave vengeance to God."*

*Page 50.*

T. NELSON AND SONS  
London, Edinburgh, and New York







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# *In Palace and Faubourg*

A Story of the French Revolution

1

BY

G. F. G.,

AUTHOR OF "GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH," "RUTH DERNENT,"  
&c. &c.

D.C.  
L. and  
C. G. G.



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## Contents.

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I. ONE OF THE PEOPLE, ... ..	9
II. IN THE PALACE, ... ..	19
III. THE MAID ANNETTE, ... ..	27
IV. STATES-GENERAL, ... ..	37
V. MAKING AN ENEMY, ... ..	54
VI. IN FORBIDDEN PLACES, ... ..	63
VII. THAT AFFAIR OF THE TENNIS-COURT, ... ..	76
VIII. THE BALL IN THE ORANGERIE, ... ..	85
IX. "À LA BASTILLE!" ... ..	96
X. SUMMER DAYS, ... ..	115
XI. TRUE AND FALSE, ... ..	123
XII. MANON IS PERPLEXED, ... ..	145
XIII. WHITE COCKADES, ... ..	158
XIV. PARIS COMES TO VERSAILLES, ... ..	169
XV. MARGUERITE'S ADVENTURE, ... ..	179
XVI. AN AMNESTY, ... ..	200
XVII. LUCILE IS COMFORTED, ... ..	214
XVIII. PLUMING FOR FLIGHT, ... ..	224
XIX. AT ST. EUSTACHE, ... ..	238
XX. "SOWING THE WIND," ... ..	248
XXI. A FORETASTE OF TERROR, ... ..	258
XXII. ANNETTE, A TRICOTEUSE, ... ..	274
XXIII. A SOMBRE BRIDAL, ... ..	290
XXIV. THE TWENTIETH OF JUNE, ... ..	302



XXV. "COUNTRY IN DANGER,"	...	...	...	...	320
XXVI. MANON RECEIVES A GUEST,	...	...	...	...	331
XXVII. CONQUERING THE KING,	...	...	...	...	351
XXVIII. "REAPING THE WHIRLWIND,"	...	...	...	...	377
XXIX. MARGUERITE'S REFUGE,	...	...	...	...	394
XXX. A SURPRISE,	...	...	...	...	407
XXXI. IN LA FORCE,	...	...	...	...	420
XXXII. A SLENDER HOPE,	...	...	...	...	430
XXXIII. A DELIVERER,	...	...	...	...	439
XXXIV. THE END,	...	...	...	...	450



# IN PALACE AND FAUBOURG.

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## I.

### ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

MANON WRITES.

**I**T may seem strange that one who is neither great nor wise should write the story of her dull and quiet life, as I am doing now. But my mother kept a record of her days when she was young, and her written words have been to Henri and Lucile and me "like apples of gold in pictures of silver." So if God should send me sons and daughters of my own, and I had no other gift to leave them, this story of my own youth might not be profitless.

I am only one of the people ; but since the poor are near God's heart, this never troubles me. None are so low as to be *canaille* in *His* sight whose own dear Christ was poor. Poverty weighs for little when one can have air and sunshine without stinting, and money at last to buy oneself a shroud.

Wise men say that young folk should be merry, and so perhaps I look too sadly upon life. But my mother was always sad, and I think, when God called her, the mantle of her *douleur* dropped on me. She was brought up on a farm in Calvados, near the town of Caen—for her father was farmer and Huguenot pastor in one ; and through her words I entered so closely



into her early life, that I seemed to feel pressing on my own young soul the burden of the tyrannous *gabelle* and the *corvée*. I learned to understand how the poor man feels who has his harvest ruined by the game of the *capitaineries*, or who is forbidden to reap his own substance lest he should fright the sitting partridges. Everything has been for so many years on the side of the great people, that one might almost think the good God was also for them. But my mother never thought so; nor do I. Some eyes are open far enough to see the "chariots of fire" which are invisible to others.

But I never thought it strange that my mother should be sad. I wondered most that, having borne such burdens, the light of peace shone so softly from her eyes. "A merry heart" is for those who have never looked into the face of sorrow, and who by that very token feel no need of healing.

I remember my mother as a sweet-faced, gentle-mannered woman, who brought to my mind pictures which I had seen of the mother of our Lord; and the fancy pleased me well. For not being at that time fully instructed in the doctrines of my mother's faith, I could not know that all such representations are but Popish devices, painted to catch the feeble-minded and unwary. My mother's sole aim, I think, was to live her life acceptably with God. Holy living was no cross to her; it was like her native air. To me it is a daily crucifixion. I cannot even keep my thoughts at home, or find my opportunities for self-denial, without much hard endeavour. Alas! I have fallen heir to her sadness, but not to her holiness of heart.

My mother always seemed old to me, yet she could not have been over thirty-five when God called her.

I was at Caen that summer with my uncle and Annette, and when I returned the house was desolate, and they told me that my mother was in the churchyard. But being wiser than my teachers, I knew rather that she had entered into the paradise of God.

All that she knew she had taught to Henri and Lucile and



me ; and but for that, Lucile and I at least would have had but little teaching. French people who are not aristocrats are so sadly ignorant, that it is small conceit to say that we are wiser than our neighbours. If one begins with zero, there are many points to gain. And why should the poor care for learning, when life is such a struggle for bread ; when they are being ground down at every vantage-point ? They cannot eat hay, even though M. Foulon should demand it of them. For I suppose the poorest creatures in St. Antoine would find it no more nourishing than would that wretched minister. *Le scélérat !* I saw him driving on the avenue but yesterday, looking to right and left with his cruel smile, as though he owned all the folk about him, body and soul. And I did not wonder that Mère Gascoigne should shake her fist at him. I think that all my spiritual strength is exhausted in a struggle with just such evil feeling as *she* puts into *action*. Yet I do not see that God can want me to agree with M. Foulon that His poor should feed on grass, in order that courtiers and queens should "fare sumptuously."

My cousin serves the Lady Marguerite de Clairac, who is one of the queen's ladies ; and through Annette's good words I have often needlework to do for my lady. The little that I earn makes the home-wheels run more smoothly, and I am thankful for it. But I thank *God*. As to Annette's lady, she has a hard heart. She laughed but yesterday at a ragged child who passed under the palace window wearing her mother's shoes. The little face was pinched with hunger ; yet my lady marked only the drollery of her clothing, and the curious, stumbling way in which the child was walking. A woman who can laugh at one of God's sorrowful little ones must be quite devoid of conscience or of heart. The laugh was sweet as music, but I am sure God had it written down against her. Yet this Lady Marguerite is so merry and gentle, one could be caught loving her unawares. You think of angels who seem to be "angels of light" and are not. If you were a Papist, you might make the



sign of the cross. Yet God forbid that I should even think of such a vain delusion. Howbeit, in the way of aristocrats, which is always a way of darkness, the Lady Marguerite is somewhat generous. She said to me laughing one day, as I left with my bundle, "Why, Manon child, your gown is too short; you need a new one." And when I answered with much shame that poor folk could not hope to shine like the aristocrats, she would fain have had me take one of her own fine gowns, covered with lace, and fit for the Austrian queen. Such foolish generosity is only worthy of blame; and as for me, I would not stoop to any lady's charity. Not so Annette. I think this Lady Marguerite has cast a spell upon her, as they say the Lady of the Land can do about the men who come too near her—a baleful influence. *Her* smile is so beguiling to some silly folk that they quite forget her sins. Even Henri, with a man's perverseness, laughs when I say my mind about her majesty. She may be vain and unwise, he says, like any other woman; but how can she be held to blame for financial troubles, or uncertain crops, or the hoarding of the harvests?

When one is so old as she, it is pity to fail for lack of wisdom surely. To me, who am neither blind nor yet under the influence of her evil witchery, she is the siren who misleads unwary souls—the foreigner with the haughty mouth who trades in the miseries of the French. When I see little children crying for bread, and women with gaunt faces and pallid lips, I send a thought toward the palace where she riots in luxury, and remember what all the world is saying—if it were not for her naughty counsels, the good king would truly be a father to us all. One must believe what every one affirms.

And I marvel that any man who has such means of discerning the truth as Henri should be so wilfully misled. Or is this rather the result of that Christian charity in which Henri and Lucile excel, while I come so far short of it?

My father was a master-builder in better times. But of late years there has been so little besides great palaces to build, that



he has been thankful to become head-carpenter, and do whatever task came readiest to his hand. His trade had served him well, and he thought it would be best for Henri also to follow it. Henri had wished to be a lawyer; but I remember well that he entered no protest, unless his set lips and the smothered fire in his eye might be accounted such. He learned his trade; but every moment which he could find by day, and often far into the night, he laboured with his books. And at last, one year ago, my father said to him, "Go, follow your bent, if you will; but I vow you will rue it. The land is infested with lawyers already, and all good folk are growing too wise to trust them."

Henri laughed, but when he saw that my father was really in earnest, he took him at his word, and set to work with right good-will in a lawyer's office in Paris. But when all is said, it is one thing to be a lawyer, and quite another to earn one's bread by the practice of the law. Besides, since times have been so hard and bread so dear, Henri gives more and more time to the labour which wins us food. There is hardly a day that my father does not say to him, "Keep to the law since you chose it, or surely the law will never keep *you*."

Perhaps not: yet better than that, I am sure that *God* will keep him; and since Henri has revered his father, I trust that he will receive the fulfilment of God's gracious promise. At least, if his "days" are not "long" in this land, they will be in a better one. God, I doubt not, minds his word, and in some way fulfils it, even in such days as these, when the world seems set to forget him.

Of late my father has been put in charge of some alterations on the palace, and so we have a little money now and then. But it seems almost a sin to get gain ourselves when so many suffer all around us. Last month I spent a few days in Paris with Lucile my sister. Her husband kept a little fancy shop in the Rue Culture Ste. Catherine; but when the times grew harder he enlisted in the army, leaving the shop for her to



manage alone. Perhaps it is just as well, for he was not always kind; and yet Lucile frets over him.

I am always angry in Paris. Lucile is pale and weak, and I know that she has too much to do and too little to eat. But when I tell her so, she says smiling that God has never yet deserted her, and she doubts not he will always be true. "Manon," she said to me one day, while we two were spreading the table and cutting the coarse black bread, "I wish you were more quiet. Your shoulders are not broad enough to bear up the burdens of France. There is nothing so good, next God's grace, as a contented heart."

That Lucile should talk of contentment—*she*, with her little one white with hunger, and her own arms too weak even to beat up a bed or to knead the dough for her baking!

"Contentment is a *gift*," I answered, "like prophecy."

"If so," said Lucile quickly, "it is not for a favoured few; all may ask, and God bestows it freely."

"O Lucile!" I said half sobbing, "I shall never be content to see you in such a case—you who are so good. Why does God let his own children suffer while others have plenty?"

"That was *David's* trouble," said Lucile, with a quaint little smile. "Isn't it strange how yesterday was like to-day, and people's thoughts run in the same groove? *David* found an answer though, *petite*—he saw that God knew best."

"Well, *I* have found no answer," I went on with much perverseness. "In the palace at Versailles there are more dainties and choice bits of food wasted every day than would feed the half of Paris—rare morsels, Lucile, of which such plain folk as you and I do not even know the names. And you are eating *this*."

I pushed the black loaf angrily from me, and turned away to hide my tears.

But Lucile made answer gently: "We cannot help the wastefulness of other people's servants, and we do not care for dainties, Manon."

"There are those who *can* help," I answered bitterly.



Lucile sat down suddenly, holding her hand to her heart. "Manon," she said, with a quiet smile, "*charity* also is a gift; but you may have it if you ask for it."

"Even the blessed Lord himself proclaimed a woe against those who 'devour widows' houses' and 'lade the poor with burdens,'" I began.

"But *we*, being only the Lord's sinful children, have no call to curse or cry woe," she answered; "*we* are told that as we judge others we shall be judged. Michael, the holy one, 'durst not bring a railing accusation' against Satan himself; do you remember, Manon?"

And I, being urged on by the tempter to say words contrary to my conscience, made answer hotly: "You think then that God likes to see us suffer and hold our tongues."

"God sits as a refiner of silver," she replied; "and blessed be his holy name, if he see in me any of such precious stuff as is worth refining!"

Whereupon I melted into tears, and Lucile went on in a more cheerful voice, "Take good courage, Manon; the States-General will meet now in a month, God be praised! and the good king means us well."

"We had just such fair hopes when M. Necker came back," I answered despondently. "He would see justice done, they said, even though the queen should go without a jewel or two. But things have gone no better than when that poor simple-minded M. de Brienne held the reins. Oh! if I were a man, and ruled in France, there should be no more scapegoats that guilty people might go free."

I could hear Lucile saying softly, as I paused a moment, "There has been one Scapegoat, Manon, that you and I might go free." But being thoroughly roused to anger, I hastened to finish my indignant words: "I would have no more feasting in the palace and starving in the hovel. I would let her majesty wear out the elegant robes she has before the children's bread was snatched to furnish her with more."



"Manon! Manon!" said Lucile, in a warning voice which I would not heed, being bent on my own undoing; and knowing well that for every angry word would be weighed a sure repentance, I still continued to distress Lucile.

"And when she spends the worth of half a kingdom on her jewels, there should be no simple-hearted countess in the way to bear the burden of her sins. I wonder why it is, since God has made the world, that he seems to have forgotten us in France!"

Lucile came up close to me then, and putting her arms about my neck began to cry.

"Oh, my dear Manon," she said, "may God give you a gentler and more reverent heart!"

"You should talk to Annette," I answered; "Annette is worse than I."

"But Annette does not love the Lord Jesus," said Lucile; and that was her bitterest reproach.

I fear that my want of charity is proof of an evil heart. Pasteur Leroy says that when one marvels about the dealings of God, saying, Why does God do this or that? it is quite the same as saying that they know better than God, which is a grievous sin. But the tempter seems to return to me with fresh allurements after my seasons of penitence; and God only knows how many unkind words which crowd upon my lips I really do crush down into my heart without a voice.

A few days ago there was a *fête*-day of some Romish saint. I have no memory for the Popish calendar, nor do I wish to set my lips to the forms of Rome. I care nothing for these things, or whether her majesty goes abroad or remains at home. It is the people who must laugh though they die by inches. The queen in her court-robes may be beautiful to others: I see nothing in her face, for my own part, but the pride of it. Beauty such as hers is only cause for tears—that God's best gifts should be put to frivolous uses, and a fair face made to cover an unregenerate heart.



We had just finished our noonday meal as the carriages rolled by, and the music drew us to the window. The gentlemen of the king's body-guard were just passing, and one could see the red-coated Swiss in the distance. There were all the equipages with the great folk in them, and their majesties with the three little ones—God bless their innocent hearts! It was just at that moment, as they moved slowly by to the sound of the music, that I saw a man in the crowd stoop and pick up a stone, which he aimed at her majesty. I think she saw him also; but she sat quite motionless, with a haughty dignity, never even moving a muscle of her face, as though she were defying them to do their worst. The window beside me was open, and as the man raised his arm I heard neighbour Gascoigne, who stood just below it, mutter to herself, "The holy Mother send it straight!"

Mère Gascoigne has a revengeful heart. Her son was put to death not two years since for poaching on the manor of some great seigneur. But whether it be that curses flung at the rich are turned to blessings on the way, or whether it be that God guards the lives of even such sinful women as that, the stone fell short of its mark. When they looked, however, to find the man who had thrown it, he was nowhere to be seen, and the guards levelled their muskets in vain. The queen still smiled, and the throng pressed on beside her, crying, "Vive le roi!" Some also there were who shouted, "Vive d'Orléans!" and still she kept on smiling as though she had not heard them.

Yet through the throng there ran a sound, as I noted well, which was no matter for smiling. If it was not quite a murmur of applause for the deed which failed, it did not fall far short of it. This was no such sound of weeping as men heard after Damiens had stabbed King Louis XV., of which my father has often told me. And it seemed to me that though only one hand threw the stone, many hearts were wishing it God-speed.



"Who was that lady in blue in the carriage behind the queen?" asked Henri suddenly.

And I answered, pleased beyond what I had reason to be, that she was the Lady Marguerite de Clairac, whom Annette serves. And Henri replied in a musing way that she was very beautiful—she might almost be a queen herself. But neighbour Gascoigne, who had been lending one ear to the question, put in her own malicious word at this. "*Fi donc*, Monsieur Beaupré!" she said; "this one is like all the rest—a ghoul who feeds upon the life of the people."

"Oh no," I answered quickly; "the Lady Marguerite is kind. I think perhaps she is a 'little leaven' in among them all."

At this up spake my father, who was glowering savagely beneath his bushy eye-brows at the music and the gaiety. "They are all a cursed set," he cried, "who 'grind the faces of the poor for bread.' And as for that fair Austrian, I doubt not the word will yet go forth for her as for another queen of whom we wot: In the place where the people die of hunger 'shall the dogs lick *thy* blood, even thine.'"

I saw Henri shudder and knit his brows, and I heard him mutter under his breath, "Great God! are we then so blameless that we dare to fling curses at others?"

But neighbour Gascoigne, who had heard my father's words, laughed maliciously and shook her fist in the air. "We'll eat grass for a bit, *à la Foulon!*" she cried, "and then we'll drink blood like the dogs."

Whereat Henri, with darkened brows, turned quickly about and strode away from the chamber. Nor do I wonder at him. God knows that though our sorrows may be many, we never can be blessed through cursing those about us.



## II.

### IN THE PALACE.

MARGUERITE'S SIDE.

April 1789.

MY name is Marguerite de Clairac, and though I and mine are not of royal blood, our name is ancient and noble. Some wise Englishman has said—Spenser or Johnson, I think—“What matters the name after all? If one called a rose a *fleur-de-lis*, it would be quite as fragrant.” That is a true speech; for if one’s name is noble and old, and one’s escutcheon clear, nothing else can matter. One can only be disgraced by some cowardly stain in one’s ancestors, or by a mixture of *canaille* blood.

Indeed it is only chance, or the will of the blessed saints perhaps, that we of the *ancien régime* are not all kings or queens.

Every one is making memoirs in these days, and keeping the letters of one’s friends. So does her gracious majesty, and all who love her, or who wish to figure in history. I do not yearn myself to be talked about a hundred years to come; but why should I not do what all the world is doing—above all, if I can aid my dear lady, by ever so little, in making her record for posterity? She often says that nothing is trifling or unimportant to one’s biographer.

My father, the Count de Clairac, lives on his estate in Languedoc. He plays the part of *le grand seigneur bienfaisant*; but he is very stately, and is also said to be proud. Why



should he not, having inherited the glory of a line of valiant ancestors, and also won renown for himself by his prowess as major-general? If those small upstarts at court, in their powder and plumes, had but half the cause for glorying, then indeed his gracious majesty were well defended.

But though my father is a devoted servant of the king, his ancestors were not always so loyal as he. They were turbulent, rebellious folk, who with others like them made much mischief by their *Frondes* and other follies, and cared little for king or prince so long as they won power and riches for themselves. I am at great trouble sometimes, being so far removed by time, fitly to draw the line between a loyal devotion to the memory of our kings and a dutiful reverence for my ancestors. People were very wild in those far-off days. When I feel like blushing for my ancestors, I try to remember how much better and wiser the world has grown since then. And as to drawing lines, the saints be praised! a woman is not expected to draw any lines whatever, unless it be certain curved lines in her drapery, and straight ones in her life and her behaviour.

Those who do not know my father call him proud and unapproachable; yet his heart is as tender as a child's. He has done so many things to make his people happy and contented, that they look upon him as a patron-saint. The Duke de Liancourt himself is not more full of wise philanthropy. There are many of the great nobles now who let their estates and people go to ruin, that they themselves may shine at court. My father's pride is not to buzz about the throne like a moth about a candle, but to have a little kingdom of his own, where he too reigns supreme. And he is a worthy king. In times of famine our people never go hungry while there is bread in the chateau. They have a chapel, and a good priest who sees to the consciences of all. And indeed to hear my father discourse upon the misery of the lower classes and the sins of the higher ones would almost make one smile. For my own part, I have a fancy that the lower classes are quite comfortable after all,



and that there is much said upon the subject of their woes simply because people like so well to talk.

My father comes every winter to court, to pay his homage to their majesties; and the queen has as many gracious words for him as though he were a prince of the blood. She has an excellent memory for past favours, and she knows that he favoured her marriage as warmly, in his humble way, as M. de Choiseul himself. It was for this reason, I think, as an honour to my good father, that I was appointed three years ago one of the ladies of her majesty's bed-chamber—"chosen," as the king's letter read, "to bear the queen company." I could not have a more delightful lot than to be near so kind a mistress. My sorrow is, that being only "lady of the bed-chamber" I can *serve* so little. But I delight myself daily with a sight of her majesty's face, and I have a share of her love.

She is no longer light-hearted and merry as my father remembers her in the old days at Marly and the little Trianon, when she inspired all the court with her fun and frolicsome ways; nor as he saw her at Vienna years ago, when the marriage negotiations were pending. He laughs even now when he remembers how demure she became the instant her terrible mamma appeared. I should think so indeed, and no marvel! One look at such a stiff, implacable mother as that might well have turned any other daughter into stone. The old Medusa!

I remember dimly myself being but a child when first she came to Paris as a bride, and how all the world was prostrate at her feet. There were tears enough in Vienna, and merriment in France. She was like the sun.

But the world is so ungrateful, and those who took most pleasure in her shining soon grew envious of her beauty. She has come to be beset with evil-wishers, and her kindest acts are maliciously construed. There is always some one to hold a misshapen glass between the people and herself—Heaven bless her!



I have been three years at court ; such happy years, such golden days, such feastings and such *fêtes*, such store of lovers ! The times grow duller now ; the *people* have so much to say. Everything was a poem once, now everything is prose. This makes one feel like a thing of the past. Of course there are always plenty of lovers ; but I have learned all the pretty things which men can say, and know how much they mean.

What good are lovers truly when they are all so simple ? What pleasure is there in having poems made upon one's eyes, and in being likened to odious heathen goddesses ? Nothing seems real or true in all the world, and men are worse than all. They are so meek until they are wedded, and then they become such miserable tyrants. A girl must be brave to choose. If I were a *bourgeoise* maiden now, how easy it might be ! only, of course, it were far better to be dead than wedded to one of the *canaille*.

Only, when a man is not noble perhaps one may see his real self more truly, there being less of glitter about him to dazzle the eyes of his sweetheart. A grand-looking fellow came with my little Manon last night when she brought back my white satin petticoat. From his stately bearing he might at least have been a captain of dragoons, although he wore neither epaulet nor sword. While Manon mounted the stairs, he stood by the merest chance, or perhaps because the saints would have it so, in the court just under my window. His arms were folded, and his head erect, and he gazed as indifferently about him as though courts and palaces were his daily portion, or as though he might have been king of all the land.

A man, however humble, must have his share of pride ; but pride that has no warrant ill becomes him. And in spite of his handsome face, this low-born lover of Manon's had no just cause, it seemed to me, to gaze so haughtily upon the pages and valets about him, as though indeed, being noble, they were not of more account than he. I wondered, however, how that small maid, with her colourless face and sad brown eyes, had



ever won so grand a cavalier; and when she entered the chamber I scanned her for a moment curiously, with mind to solve the riddle. Her demure little courtesy gave me no enlightenment. She has the semblance of being too saintly for such as I—a fashion of saying with her eyes that she cries shame upon my levity. Indeed she approves of nothing upon earth, that strait-laced little maiden, but may be a sermon or a prayer. Her large dark eyes and grave, antique demeanour have a curious fascination for a *vaurien* like me.

“Little Sainte Manon,” I said, “you have read me many a lecture with your eyes which you dared not utter with your lips; but you will never be able to look so wisely upon my innocent follies again. Your lover may be sedate and grave, but he is only a lover after all, and love is the worst of follies.”

“Lover!” she gasped, her face breaking into a rosy glow. “I have no lover, lady—nor ever will, most likely.”

“O Manon,” I said, “don’t make such rash avowals. He waits now beneath the window, and could answer for himself with a truer tongue than you will answer for him.”

“Dear heart,” she replied, with such a serious face and dolorous sigh, as though loving were among the seven deadly sins, “that you should speak so of *Henri*!” And then it seemed to flash upon the girl that there might be something mirthful in the fancy. A smile crept over her face—a solemn smile, which would not have seemed amiss if *Henri* had been shriven and shrouded and laid away in his coffin.

“And why should I not speak of *Henri*?” said I. “Is *Henri* better than another man, that he may not be called the lover of a good little damsel like thee?”

“Why, madame, *Henri* is my *brother*,” she replied; “one could see in passing that *Henri* is my brother.”

Yet surely, unless one is over clear-sighted, one might search long for the likeness. But while I laughed over my blunder, she sat with discreetly folded hands and sighed. Her colour waxed a little deeper for my question, but her temper was un-



ruffled as an angel's. So I looked at her work, which was neatly done, and fell to commending her skill and speed. But though my words brought smiles across her face, the smiles were far from sunny. I suppose her poor little life is like the streets of that great crowded Paris—too narrow to let the sun shine fairly in and flash around with the joy of summer time.

"The saints have smiled upon you, Manon," I said at last, "in granting you so brave a brother, and one who is withal so handsome too."

Manon folded her hands demurely on her breast, as though making the sign of the cross against the wiles of the tempter. I do not love to be regarded as a mouth-piece of evil, or to have crosses made for my confusion, so I asked her, "Why do you cross yourself at that? Surely gratitude is a virtue dear to the holy Mother herself."

"Cross myself, dear lady!" she cried in great indignation. "I beg that you will not think me given to such Popish practices!" But she added in a gentler fashion, and very sagely, "It was *God* who gave me Henri, and who gives me also every good and perfect gift. I am sometimes tempted to be ungrateful; but God is always good, and, bless his holy name! neither Henri nor I ever worship images or speak prayers to helpless saints."

"Well," I answered, much amused, "one might have worse companionship than saints and angels, my sober Manon, since you and I, and Henri too, are but foolish sinners ourselves, and need such constant shriving. It surely is a blessed thing that such holy souls will stand between us and the wrath of God the Father."

But Manon answered wisely still: "I know, dear lady, that I am a great sinner, for often my heart is full of hatred and unkindness. But I know, too, that it is only God who can shrive me, and no one can stand between me and the Father but God's holy Son—no angel who would fail to understand, and no saint who has sinned as I have."



I heard at that moment a step in the corridor, and feared lest some one should overhear her heretical words ; for there are envious ears about the palace aptly fitted to busy tongues. Some folk say many things besides their prayers—roving about like the “roaring lion” of which the Church has taught us, to seek whose good name they may devour.

“Unlearned folk like you and me, Manon,” I said to her, “should take the gospel as the Church accords it to us. I am indeed well quit if I have no penance to do for listening to your heretical babble. However, since the petticoat is well done, I will let you take this bodice to be done in *fleurs-de-lis*. Also, if you will be a good little Christian, I will commend you to her majesty’s tirewoman for neatness in needlecraft. Adieu ; I trust that your cavalier is not weary.”

And Manon, thus dismissed, departed with sighs and thanks. It was at that very moment that I fell to thinking how it might be better, when all is said, to be a maiden like Manon, who is not forced to choose a lover for his titles or estates.

I was at the *salon* of the Comtesse d’Ossun this evening, where her majesty attended ; and now I am too full of many thoughts to think of sleeping. I wish I might be the queen’s tirewoman or her *femme-de-chambre*. I am dying with envy of that tiresome Madame Campan, who guards her like a spaniel. If I were her majesty I should shut Campan in a box, and take her out when I had need of her ; she talks too much. I believe she records all that the queen says and does, she watches her so closely. Some day she will write a book to let all the world know how many times her majesty sneezes of an afternoon ; as if it were not her fault, and that of others like her, that the queen should sneeze at all. Madame Etiquette may be dead and cold, but she has no lack of followers ; and it is better that the throne should crumble than that her majesty should fail to show herself at need. If one must always bear a yoke, what use to be a queen ? One might as well be a galley-slave as a slave of precedent.



The poorest woman in France has a corner which she calls her home, if it be only an unglazed hut: they say there are plenty such in the provinces. And I suppose there *are* women who would choose a *hut*, where they may shut the door, rather than a palace like Versailles, which always swarms with *canaille*, and where one can never quit one's smelling-bottle. They cannot even keep the rabble from the *cœil de bœuf*; and the king's bed-chamber is a constant spectacle for his people, if he leaves it for an hour. His majesty is heartily pleased that his good people of Versailles love him so well as to take an interest in his little private matters. For me, I should choose less love and more seclusion.

My eyes have grown suddenly heavy with sleep, and my candle has burnt low. Annette, I see, is dozing in her corner, and I must send her to bed, the poor, faithful thing, that she may take care of her roses, as I must do of mine.



### III.

#### *THE MAID ANNETTE.*

HAVING looked to her roses so late that night, the Lady Marguerite was slow to rise on the morning which came after. The outside world had been long awake, the sun was well on his journey, and Annette the maid stood by a window and watched impatiently the gathering crowd—a motley assemblage of all classes and conditions; for the meeting of the States-General had drawn many strangers to Versailles. A certain provincial element gave an altered tone to the crowd, which Annette noted well, being apt at marking trifles.

She was a young woman who gave one the impression of being thoroughly gathered together. Her figure was lithe and her head erect. Her eyes were black, less soft than brilliant. But her skin was so tender and blooming that one did not take note of the sharpness of her features; and her lips parted over white, even teeth. They parted pleasantly, but also, at rare intervals, with a smile which had a certain canine fierceness in it. Yet on the whole Annette was a handsome woman; and between herself and her young mistress there existed a sort of happy comradeship, and this notwithstanding the fact that, in the mind of the lady at least, the chasm between them was as wide as the path from star to star.

As Annette turned for the fifth time toward her lady's bed-chamber, she spied on the escritoire the leaves of the journal in which Marguerite had been writing the night before. Annette never failed to observe the trifles which lay in her path; any-



thing could serve to store her mind—it was this to-day and that to-morrow—and even the smallest thing might some day prove of use.

There was no movement yet in the bed-chamber, only, the door being open, a faint sound of breathing reached her ear. Annette laughed, but not unpleasantly. “Mademoiselle cannot keep her secrets,” quoth she in an undertone. “How many love-letters have I not read at one time or another! M. d’Arblay now—alas! how one pities such poor fools.”

Annette was reading the leaves hastily, catching a word here and there, when the faint sound from the bedroom suddenly ceased, and she heard her own name called in quick, imperative tones.

“Ay, madame,” she answered with much composure, laying the manuscript cautiously away in the drawer of the *escritoire*. “Madame is late,” she said, walking up to the bed with a pleasant smile, and drawing the curtains apart. “All the world is *astir* and madame sleeps.”

“One must sleep *sometimes*, Annette,” said the lady, rising slowly on her elbow. “Whatever should make the world so foolish as to rise from bed with the sun?”

“Ay, but the sun is well on his way,” replied Annette, proceeding deftly to draw on her lady’s stockings; “and moreover all Versailles is wild over the approaching *fête*.”

“Don’t let us speak of that miserable event until we are forced to,” said Marguerite shortly.

Annette laughed, but with all due respect. “The world goes round, madame,” she said, “and whether one will or no, one must whirl on to things.”

“For shame, Annette!” said Marguerite again. “You are a court maiden; you should shed tears and not rejoice at things which humble the king.”

“I, madame!” said Annette, with naïve astonishment. “*Mais oui*—of course I am a court maiden, I adore the king. But I am a Française; in Caen I was a patriot. The king should not



be humbled because his good people meet together to ask his help in their troubles."

Marguerite had seated herself before her mirror, and proceeded to shake loose the masses of her beautiful hair. She laughed at Annette's wise defence.

"You have such a talent for 'adoring,'" she replied, "that you should at least have a lover upon whom to exercise it."

"*Qui sait?*" cried Annette, shrugging her shoulders; "that might be. Madame has so many lovers of her own, she never paused to consider that Annette might have one also."

"Sweet Sainte Marguerite! I have thought of it a score of times," said the lady graciously. "Every brave fellow I have seen, with a strong arm and a handsome face, I have thought of you, Annette."

"Alas, madame! when one is poor one thinks seldom of marriage," said Annette with a sigh. "The man I love has little enough to keep himself alone."

"Ah, *pauvrette!*" cried Marguerite lightly, "tell me his name, and I will give you a portion; I will be your patron-saint, Annette."

Annette seized her lady's hand and pressed it to her lips. "It is my cousin Henri," she confessed demurely. "Perhaps madame has seen him, but she would never notice."

"Ay, but I *have* noticed," said Marguerite, "for he came with Manon but yester evening. And I wish I myself were as sure of my fortune as you are with such a brave-looking lover, Annette."

Annette eyed her mistress furtively from beneath her long dark lashes. "He is not so warm a lover as one might like," she answered, with a curious little laugh, "nor so stanch a patriot as some whom I have known. But madame will not think the worse of him for that."

This was true; and, strange as it may seem, it was also true that Marguerite thought no worse of him for being so cold a lover. He and Annette were not of accord in her mind.



Somewhere there was a want of harmony, and by some subtle womanly instinct she perceived without defining it.

So she answered in very gentle tones, though somewhat coldly, "You are not a patriot yourself, Annette, but a loyal queen's woman. If your lover were a patriot, your heart would be pulled asunder between your duty and your love."

"Alas!" said Annette, with drooping lashes, "I could never become such a martyr for any love but your own, dear lady. I *was* a patriot in Caen; now I am a queen's woman surely."

"Annette," said Marguerite with a little laugh, as though half-ashamed of her own severity, and putting her hands on the girl's shoulders as she knelt to fasten her girdle, "forget that you were a patriot at Caen. This Caen of yours, it seems to me, must be a seditious place; it is always in wrath about something."

Annette's face was downcast—one could not see the flashing of her eyes. In a moment she answered, "One is a fool to sacrifice *all* for one's country; it is better to gnaw one's heart than to be ever in a struggle. Caen is full of silly patriots, madame. I have one friend there, no older than I, who is devoted like a nun to the country. Alas, poor girl! you would think to hear her talk, madame, that she is not right in her mind. She would give her life for France: that is silly, when there is only one life to give. Such fancies women have when they are shut away in convents: it is there that Charlotte has learned to hate the king as though he were the great arch-enemy."

"Your friend had better attend to her prayers, poor thing," said Marguerite coldly. "It is great shame that in the very bosom of the blessed Church a woman should grow disloyal to her king."

"Madame, it is a *crime*," said Annette solemnly, "for the king is next to God and the blessed Mother." She crossed herself with a rapid motion of her slender fingers, and her eyes were



downcast. As her lady turned toward the other room she smiled and stood watching her.

"Annette," said Marguerite suddenly, "did you see some papers of mine on the *escritoire* this morning?"

"Papers, madame?" repeated Annette slowly, as though striving to recollect. "Ah, yes; a letter that madame was writing. I laid it beneath the *porte-feuille* in the little corner drawer. With so many prying eyes about, one cannot be too careful."

Marguerite was not studying physical phenomena at that moment, and therefore missed the lights and shadows on the face of her maiden.

"Annette," she said, "you are a good girl, I do make sure of that; but remember always to keep your ears well closed when foolish folk defame the king."

It occurred to Annette, even in the midst of the courtesy which she made, that her horizon was wider than her lady's—she knew more than might be spoken in such an atmosphere. She had not lived in far Caén and travelled thence to Paris with her eyes closed; nor did she believe all the fables that were told her, however credulous she seemed. Annette's thoughts were not peaceful; but aloud she answered quietly, with folded hands,—

"The saints forbid that Annette should give an ear to any traitors who defame the king. But, dearest lady, none defame the king; the king is too good—he is a father. I have heard people speak indiscreetly at times, madame—those who were vexed by evil landlords, perhaps; but I tell them the king knows best. He would rather be hungry himself than that they should starve. But then, as for that, some folk—God pity them!—are made to be fed, and others to work and be hungry."

Marguerite turned her head quickly and looked at her hand-maiden. Annette's eyes were again cast down, and a melancholy smile just curved the corners of her thin red lips. She had no look of guile; one might almost have taken her for some demure old-time saint intent upon her rosary.



"That is all, Annette," said the lady gently ; "I shall not need you any longer now."

Annette walked briskly out into the corridor, and, not being in haste, paused for a moment by a window from which she had a view of the garden and the throng. A gentleman presently drew near, who also paused, without observing her.

"*Bonjour*, Monsieur d'Arblay," she remarked, with a saucy movement of her head.

"Ah, it is the little Annette!" he exclaimed, suddenly spying her figure in the shadow of the drapery, and making her a mocking salutation. Annette bit her lip. There were others in the palace, higher in rank than he, who would not have scorned to give her a kindly word for the sake of her beautiful lady. This *vaurien* would never condescend to aught but mockery.

"Monsieur has no message for my lady?" she asked with a grim smile.

"Whatever message I may have for that lady of thine, fair Annette," he replied, "I can deliver with my own tongue." And giving her a nod of good-natured indifference he turned away.

Annette stood gazing after him. "If he were not a patriot," she said to herself, "and a friend of M. de Lafayette, I should despise his lordly face. Now there is M. le Marquis"—and with the word a smile of unwonted gentleness played over Annette's face—"he treats one as though one had a human soul. If my lady be wise she will become Madame de Nesle. But my lady is not wise."

That might be true, yet, even lacking wisdom, one may be drawn by force of circumstances into choosing with discretion ; and this lady's future seemed about to shape itself, even against her choosing. M. de Nesle had already presented his cause to the king, and his majesty, who took a kindly interest in all the ladies of his family, had listened with fatherly good-will. Why should he not? If Marguerite belonged to a proud old family,



this suitor had rank and wealth quite equal to her own ; he was a brave man and a gentleman. King Louis was quite able to discern and appreciate sterling qualities like those of M. de Nesle ; he saw no reason why he should not find favour with even nobler-born maidens than Marguerite. If anything stood between them, it could be only the whims and caprices of a woman ; and his majesty had not been without his personal experience of these.

But, given King Louis's gracious approval, and a heart not unreasonably faint, still this lover of ours had dallied with his fate for two whole days at least. The prize might lie within his grasp, yet he feared to risk a little in hope of winning all. Yet what time could be more auspicious than this, when through a common trouble all loyal hearts were drawn toward each other ?

That Saturday and the Sabbath which followed were gala days at Versailles. It would have been treason to suppose his majesty less happy than all the world, since his face was wreathed in smiles ; and Marie Antoinette might be shedding tears in her closet, yet she too walked with a serene countenance before the sovereign people. When all the world came on Monday to visit the king, she gave her hand as graciously to the kisses of the multitude as though the love of the people were the one desire of her heart.

"Yet she will weep to-night," said Marguerite to herself, as she stood in her state-robes watching the grand celebration. She had risen earlier that Monday morning, finding it true, as Annette had said, that the world is always going round, and whether one will or no, one is always coming to things. She at last had come to the States-General ; and—because it is the dower of youth to be merry—she was still able, being young, to take some satisfaction in the music and the feasting, in the fine dresses and the pretty compliments. As to the procession to the Church of St. Louis, and from St. Louis to that of Notre Dame, in which she with all the court should bear a



part, she had her own unspoken thoughts. She fancied she should have felt much the same if she had been a Parthian or Cimbrian princess, in the days of ancient Rome, compelled to grace the triumph of some great Roman general. The people would not mock at her now, perhaps, as the old Romans might have done; but if they chose to do so, no one would dare to hinder, and all the same she should be conscious of gracing a victory. Those who knew it would be laughing in their hearts.

A tedious time it took to crawl through the streets in those open carriages; and how the people stared! But well they might; the very air seemed ablaze with gold and silver. Even Marguerite gazed back with wonder, as the procession was stayed a moment near the church by the pressure of the crowd. The Cent Suisses, with their handsome faces and plumed caps, had halted on either side of the royal carriage—a wall of defence—while beyond, as far as the eye could reach, were brilliant uniforms of red and blue and green, waving plumes and shining epaulets, and bayonets glittering in the sunlight. And not the least feature of the pageant was that of which she formed a part. The mockery of it struck her even then. It flashed upon her fancy that the gay ladies and gallant cavaliers were making their bows before the foot-lights; that the scene would soon be over. Marguerite gave a little shudder; was it a presentiment perhaps?

A detachment of the king's body-guard, the Compagnie de Noailles, in which the marquis was an officer, stood near her carriage. The eyes of that gentleman met hers with a question in them, and almost against her will she returned him a friendly smile. The lady at her side caught the glance on its way, and also smiled, being apt at reading problems. But suddenly her smile was changed to a cry of alarm; for the crowd had cleared, the horses sprang suddenly forward, and a little child was about to be crushed beneath the feet of the leaders. "The poor infant is dead," thought madame; and yet before the cry had left her lips a tall young fellow leaped forward from the crowd, eluding



the bayonets of the guards, and stooping under the very hoofs of the impatient horses, caught the little one in his arms.

It was all over in the passing of a breath ; and as madame drew a sigh of relief the young man was already bearing the child away, perched high upon his shoulder. No one applauded. The procession moved slowly on.

"*À la bonne heure !*" said madame, with a long-drawn sigh of relief ; "that was well done surely."

Marguerite said nothing. She sat with clasped hands and eyes that watched, through her tears, the little one borne aloft upon those strong young shoulders ; and she thought how well it was to be young and brave and a helper of those in trouble.

"Annette is happy," she said to herself, "to have such a worthy lover."

Her companion, as though echoing her thought, remarked, with an air of easy indifference, that there were often fine specimens of manhood among the *canaille*.

The sermon seemed unreasonably long. The good Bishop of Nancy touched upon matters which it seemed to Marguerite should not have been considered in the house of God. Worse than all, that wretched crowd had the irreverence to applaud his worship at the very altar steps ! But all things have an end at last, and if time will whirl us round to troublesome facts and days which are unwelcome, it must by the same sure token also whirl us from them. The procession was over at last, and the sermon, and the mass. The marquis, with hope kindled in his heart by his lady's smile, drew her aside that evening into one of the shaded avenues of the palace garden, and asked her the same old question which all lovers ask in their time.

Marguerite was weary after the long, strange day, and he had not judged amiss in thinking that she would turn more readily just now to one of assured loyalty like him. For this little lady, though she thought herself wise in matters of love, had an empty heart which never yet had found its hero. Per-



haps it never might ; there may not be a hero born for every gentle heart. But her faith in the divine right of king and courtier, and in the need that every noble maiden should be wedded to her peer, was almost as sacred as her belief in holy Church. M. de Nesle was to her like any other noble of his class. He might never make a hero, but surely he could never be a coward or disloyal to the king. So she listened to his story, and when it was finished told him, with a little sigh, that, since it was his majesty's wish, she would consider the matter, adding, as an after-thought,—

“If it is also the wish of the *queen*, I must obey, for the will of her majesty is as the will of the dear saints to me.”

She believed that the queen had another idyl in her fancy, with quite a different hero. And so she still reserved to herself a peradventure—left one bridge standing behind her.



IV.

*STATES-GENERAL.*

MANON WRITES.

*May 1789.*

FATHER has had much to do of late, overlooking the carpenters who are altering the Salle des Menus for the meeting of the States-General. This is work after his own heart. It seems as though, in his humble way, he were helping on the nation. But when it came to erecting the raised platform for the king and nobles, the work went sore against him. He had great need to think of the bread he was earning to give him strength at all. For what can one hope from an assembly where the oppressors are exalted?

But if father has been helping the nation, it is little I can do. I keep a fast-day every week, and so I have a few cents to spend upon the poor; but one has need to think very hard of the widow's mite to suppose that these can count. My alms are like the loaves and fishes amongst the five thousand, and the dear Lord not standing by to multiply them.

When we were in Paris about three weeks ago, the famished people besieged a paper-factory in Rue St. Antoine; and I lay and cried all the night. I saw the Garde Française shooting into the crowd—we were so near—and I felt as though it would be a sin ever to laugh again. It was hard to be shot for being hungry. When there are no money and no food one grows mad; and M. Réveillon, who owned the factory, had said such cruel things. He was once a labouring man himself, yet he had lost



his memory so far as to say that a labouring man could live and feed his children on fifteen sous a day ! It is hard to pity such men as these when they meet with punishment.

Yet Henri will insist, with a man's obstinacy, that the Garde Française were right to disperse the crowd—a soldier should only consider his duty.

There are many false ideas of duty, like false gods, which men set up to worship.

The fourth of May has been long set before us as a jubilee, for every one said the States-General would make an end to our troubles. How could such wise men—the wisest of the nation—fail to find some way of straightening the tangle ? And when it came, it was such a glorious day. The very air, from the early morning, seemed full of people, people everywhere—on lamp-irons and house-tops and railings, on every vantage-place, and thronging every avenue and street.

I was up with the first rays of the sun ; for how could one sleep on such a blessed day ? After my work was done I went down to the corner of the street where it joins the grand avenue, and searched out a spot in the shadow of a doorway, opposite the Church of Notre Dame, where I could see the procession as it entered.

The air was mild as a day in midsummer, and sweet with the fragrance of grass and early flowers ; but the human creatures seemed to have missed the beauty of the spring time. I saw ragged, hard-faced women pushing their way through the crowd with little babies in their arms, and men with fierce eyes and grimy hands, who might well hail the light of such a day. My father's friend, M. Danton, was addressing a group of these, towering above them all like some giant in a fairy tale. They listened with open mouths, as though he spoke the very truth of God ; and perhaps he did. But though his voice is so loud that the roar of it rose above the murmur of the throng, yet it was only a *sound* to my ears. My father says he is an eloquent man, and that his words have wonderful power. I should think



they must needs be like the words of an angel to make one forget the ugliness of his face.

I became weary waiting before the procession arrived, and then I was weary with looking. Such pageants are fitter for children than for creatures of sense and reason ; though, like a child, I also was pleased with the fine robes and fair faces of the ladies. But I like better the king's face, which is plain and dull, than that of the treacherous, painted woman who sat beside him. There were crushed tears in her eyes, and dark circles beneath them ; and her lip curled with disdain, as though she were angry that the people should be glad.

I suppose there were men in the court of King Ahab who praised the beauty of the queen, when she had "painted her face and tired her head," and her smiles hid the blackness of her heart. It is so that men praise the Austrian now.

As I turned from her in anger—for which may God forgive me!—I saw Henri standing, tall and erect, a little way before me ; and I thought with myself how much fitter he was to be a king than that foolish man who is now set over us, and who, it is said, cares only for his stomach. If a king must be, then he should be braver and stronger and better than other men.

And while I stood thinking this, with the crowd so dense about me that it seemed to shut out the very air, there was a slight commotion in front, and some women who had a better view fell to screaming and crossing themselves. Then a man with a little child on his shoulder came pushing his way through the throng, and I saw that it was Henri.

"That is what a king should be," I said to myself—"strong to protect and save." I remembered what the good pasteur Leroy had told us of One far more compassionate than Henri, who bears the feeble lambs from the crush of life to "quiet resting-places."

As this thought passed through my mind, I raised my eyes and saw close beside me a young man who is well known to



Annette. He is a great patriot, and writes for M. Desmoulin's journal. He has been often to our house on business with my father, who considers him a worthy young man. But as I have a feeling that Henri would not agree with my father, I was glad that his compassion for the little child had drawn him away before M. Foucher appeared. It is useless to trouble people with such foolish matters as a few words here and there; and it is naught but Christian charity to speak kindly to folk about you, though you may not quite approve of them. Besides, in such a crowd, it is well to find an acquaintance, with ready wit and a smooth tongue, to tell one all that should be known. Although M. Foucher is careless about his dress, he can be courteous upon occasion; and when he sees fit, his manners are most engaging. An undue carelessness in matters of dress has grown in these days to be almost a badge of patriotism.

He remarked that this was an "occasion of supreme importance to France," and a "death-knell to the usurpations of tyrants;" that "all hearts were beating as one;" that the "iron chains of ages had been snapped asunder;" that "France had tasted the air of freedom, and would yet find her Brutus."

And although his sentences were too fine for ordinary talk, and quite unfit to be thrown away upon a simple body like me, yet they found an echo in my heart. The comparison is not pleasant if one carries it out, yet it did seem almost like "casting pearls before swine" to throw his eloquence away on the street corner. And all the same, I was vexed with the fancy that he might be only arranging an article for the newspaper. Yet having no wish to discompose his thoughts, I said commonplace things to lead him on.

"The light is breaking at last after centuries of darkness, mademoiselle," he said, "and the people have been blindfolded so long that they can scarcely discern its coming."

"The king rejoices too," I answered cheerfully. "He does not seem a bad king, if one must have a king at all."



"Yes," he answered, with a bitter laugh; "he sees that there is a limit to all things. He seems like clay in the hands of the potter. But, mademoiselle, though our chains are dropping, we are still slaves. Let me tell you something. Only this morning a friend of mine sought the palace to feast his eyes upon the humiliation of royalty; and I vow," he cried, striking his hands together with flashing eyes, "one of those perfumed and painted courtesans, the minions of that Austrian woman, had the gross effrontery to order him to be thrust from the grand gallery. Our chains still clank, mademoiselle."

And I answered with much sympathy that such indignities must be hard for a man to bear. "Besides," I added, "one can see quite plainly that her majesty sees no reason to rejoice."

M. Foucher laughed, and said some merry words about women being always most severe toward those of their own sex. And, of course, though a woman is apt to know a woman's heart by the very beating of her own, yet I blushed remorsefully for my lack of charity. There must be cause of blushing when one has to be taught pity by a man. I remembered, too, what I had heard a few days before—that the little dauphin is lying very ill, and may in all likelihood never recover. Any mother may well mourn over such a woe as this and not be called in question for her tears.

When I mentioned this to M. Foucher, he shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands. The dauphin would be little loss, he said, and was not worth mourning over. "For all the world knows," he added, "that he is a poor, misshapen little object. And those who are well informed say that he quite shares the dislike of the nation for madame his mother, and will shriek if she comes to his bedside."

"Ah," I exclaimed, "how terrible!" I did not speak my thoughts to M. Foucher, having said enough already; but I could not help remarking to myself how clearly such a fact must prove the worthlessness of a mother.



And M. Foucher answered my thought, although I had not spoken it. "Of course, if this is true," he said, "she must be guilty of every crime the nation has laid to her charge. An unnatural mother is capable of any enormity."

But let God be her judge; one day she must stand before him. For that reason, and not because I thought good of her myself, I ventured to say that some people praise her charity. They say, as I told M. Foucher, that when the people were starving a year or so ago her majesty gave largely from her own private purse—yes, even her jewels—to help them.

"Oh yes," he answered dryly; "a woman will do much for notoriety. Perhaps you never heard, mademoiselle, that many millions were paid, at that same time, for a new château for her majesty. The people are not hoodwinked; they understand the matter perfectly."

M. Foucher gave me much useful information. He told me there would still be trouble, unless the king would consent to such manner of voting as the people demanded. I was too stupid to understand clearly. It seems that the *tiers état* have double representation, yet still the *noblesse* and the clergy have an advantage over them. One might be sure it would be so when the Church of Rome has a voice in the councils. It seems also that wise men can be as foolish as children; for the whole trouble appears to be that the *noblesse* and clergy want to meet in a separate room. This seems to me a silly matter, and not worth quarrelling over; yet it shows a spirit of pride, which should be crushed.

M. Foucher desired that I should go with him the next day to the gallery of the Salle des Menus, and I was fain to consent; yet knowing that every morning brings its share of toil, and that all days may not be holidays, I thought best to practise a little self-denial. So we walked home together through the crowd, and the ringing of bells and the firing of cannon followed in our footsteps.

It was surely a day of great gladness, and many voices



shouted, "Vive le roi!" It shows much kindness of heart when one can cry with a right good-will, "Vive le roi!" However, I saw many hard and sullen faces in the crowd, and heard some curses joined to the name of the queen. There were also some who cried, "Vive d'Orléans!" which was much the same as "À bas l'Autrichienne!" M. Foucher was pleased with this. Her majesty, he said, was like the wooden horse within the gates of Troy: it would be a happy thing if the hand of Providence would remove her.

But God does not always remove our trials when we think best, and I suppose he treats nations somewhat as he does his children. Besides, when a man is wedded to a wife, he has taken her for worse as well as for better; and to send her back to her kindred, as some folk propose, without sufficient cause, would be a sin.

Henri did not return until nightfall, whereat I was much disturbed, not only because I was over-wearied and ready to asleep in my chair, but also because of an errand with which I had charged him. I forgot to state that I had not been able to finish the Lady Marguerite's bodice, on account of a very evil sore upon the forefinger of my right hand. So being very busy that morning, I had begged of Henri to take my message of excuse to the lady; and having great mistrust of those court servitors, I charged him to render my excuses only to herself.

Henri demurred a little at this, having no sufficient cause, he said, to ask such favour from a high-born lady; a servant could carry his message, or he could render it to Annette. But when I assured him with tears that I had given my *word* to have the garment ready at the appointed time, and that no other could explain my trouble so well as he, Henri relented, being kind of heart. He might be thrust out of the palace for his impudence, he said with a smile; but if I still insisted he would make the venture.

Having this on my mind, I was rejoiced about ten o'clock to



hear his footstep at the door. But while we took our supper and black bread together, we found so many things to speak of that I had almost forgotten to ask if he had seen the Lady Marguerite; and when at last I suddenly recalled the matter to his mind, he answered simply yes, and naught besides. Now "yes" by itself will seldom content a woman, however it may a man. So lest he should escape me, I poured out another cup of coffee, for which I really had no need.

"Was not my lady gracious, Henri?" I asked.

"What need of grace, Manon, in the passing of a message?" he answered shortly; "and what question of grace toward such a poor *scélérat* as I am?"

Now whatever may be Henri's faults, bitterness of speech was never counted among them. His words were cold, and he suddenly rose from the table as though he would like to put an end to the matter. But seeing that I still sat sipping my coffee, he re-seated himself and began talking of other things—of the procession and the States-General, of the want of Christian charity in the *noblesse* and the clergy. But all his talking could not blind me to the fact that something had gone amiss besides the aristocrats. Notwithstanding Henri's self-control, his pride is quick to take affront.

"Henri," I said quite plainly at last, "it is not only the troubles of *France* which weigh upon your mind. As to your deserts at the Lady Marguerite's hands, I am sure, if she were the queen herself, you deserve to be treated like a gentleman."

Henri laughed. "For vehement eloquence commend me to Manon," he said mockingly. "Why, *chère*, we cannot all have our deserts in this world in the fashion you would mete them out. Don't fret yourself; the times are too grave to cavil over a lady's words. Be sure she will never give you or me a second thought."

"You should not mind her speaking like a Papist," I ventured; "she has been reared in the bosom of Rome. I suppose she is like the heathen—not quite accountable."



"I am not waging war on Papists," said Henri shortly. "We are all children of one Father."

"But she is fair, Henri," I said, as he rose again, "and so young."

Henri's eyes flashed. "O my God!" he cried with sudden passion, "what will become of such as she if the reckoning overtakes them?"

"Will there be a reckoning?" I asked breathlessly, rising and putting my hand on his shoulder. "*What* is coming, Henri? What do you mean? Will not the States-General settle all?"

"I would to God they might, Manon," he answered.

He still seemed to have no mind to tell me what I wished to know, and there suddenly came to me a memory which more than once had made me smile. I am not over-curious, yet it grieves me to see Henri in trouble, and I know that a little laugh will often open one's lips. So I said, with some hesitation, "Do you remember, Henri, the day you went with me to the palace—how you charged me with having been gone so long?"

"Yes," he answered quietly, but raising his eyebrows a little.

And I went on, "Though *you* do not choose to tell me what the Lady Marguerite said to *you*, I shall be more kind. She looked at you through the window while I went up the stairs; and, Henri, she took you for my lover, and had her little jest about you."

Henri frowned, and his face became flushed. I know not if it were with anger or with the heat of the chamber. But he would not please me by asking a question, although I paused a little that he might.

"I do not mean," I said then, "that she was unkind. Fine ladies are much given to jesting. You were handsome and brave-looking, she said; and it was a fine thing for a simple maid like me to have so grand a lover."



Henri turned away with a short laugh, which was not so merry as my lady's.

"The Lady Marguerite was kind," he answered, "to show such interest in a low-born fellow." There was a ring of scorn in his voice; and Henri, as I said, is not wont to be scornful. He turned abruptly from me and walked to the window. The flush had passed from his face, and he looked pale and tired.

"The room is close," I said quickly; "and you are weary. Let me bring you a glass of wine, while you rest yourself in the great chair."

Henri smiled with much disdain. "I am quite well, Manon, and not driven to coddling yet," he said; and then he bent over me and kissed my forehead, and before I could collect myself for further speech, I heard the door of the street close after him.

The people still thronged the avenues, and the bells were ringing all the night. The air was full of music.

My father did not appear at breakfast next morning; for since he has had so much work, and is over-wearied at times, he will often sleep until eight or nine o'clock. Moreover, he is sorely afflicted with pains in his joints. At times he groans and wails like a child. I think within myself, however, that the last attack which befell him was owing less to bodily infirmity than to the fact that Dr. Marat of Neuchâtel had been to see him the evening before, and they were long closeted together. I don't know how my father can have aught to do with such an unseemly fellow. Dr. Marat calls himself the "friend of the people;" but he is no friend of mine, for the very sound of his voice at the door makes me shiver. My father says he is a far-seeing man, if he does smell of the stable—being horse-doctor to the Comte d'Artois. My father, too, is far-seeing, I suppose, for he also has plans for curing all the evils of the world. But I trust that my father's visions are not like those of Dr. Marat, whose journal it makes me



shudder to read. Nay, the very look of his eyes—which are like a frog's—causes my blood to creep.

Therefore I do not wonder that my father was made ill after such an evil visit.

But though Henri and I had our breakfast alone, not a word was spoken between us which could recall our trouble of the night before. Henri was simply his old self, and seemed in haste to be away to secure a seat for the opening of States-General.

He was scarcely out of the room when I heard my father call in a voice that waxed louder every moment that I lingered ; and though it is hard to fly hither and thither with a cheerful heart when one has many cares, yet I know one cannot follow the Lord without a burden, but must lift the crosses as they come, not seeking to step over or avoid them. Quickly as I ran, however, only waiting to set his breakfast upon a tray, Mère Gascoigne, coming in through the back door, was before me ; and I found her with my father, in his little chamber which overhangs the doorway.

She is a tall, angular woman, this neighbour Gascoigne. Her nose and chin are long and pointed, and her cheeks, which are somewhat red, have caverns in them, above which the bones protrude like overhanging cliffs. Her small black eyes are keen at spying out, yet they are kind as well as curious. If she finds the evil in every one, she is not slow to note the good.

She draws her hair straight from her narrow forehead and winds it in a knob on the crown of her head. It never troubles her there, she says, as the knob is no larger than a pigeon's egg. I cannot see why it should ever trouble her in any case. I think she, too, is hungry, and that want has sharpened her features ; but she would share her last bit of bread with a friend, and she seems always to have something to share.

Our fare is meagre, but we have no need of charity. Father must have meat ; but Henri cares little for it. His taste



seems to have changed with the bitterness of the times. But the good strong Nannette, who comes in to do the heaviest work for me, can make bread out of very poor flour; and since we eat with quiet hearts and good consciences, we fare better than the queen herself, who has neither.

But being an unlearned woman, and not a godly one, neighbour Gascoigne does not bear this in mind. And she began peering at once under the covers of the dishes which I had brought my father.

"No wonder you growl, poor soul," she said: "minced meat is a sorry dish for an ailing man. I know some men who would throw it from the window. I thought it most likely you were sick with hunger, and I caught up a bowl of beef broth when I heard you call. Drink it and grow strong, old man." Then seeing that father still growled like one who is only half content, she made haste to assure him that matters were to be mended now, and we all should have our rights.

"That is all very well, neighbour," he said; "but the States-General can't undo the wrongs of ages in a day. There's too much wrong for that. The people have slept; but God has seen. Do you bear in mind who says, old woman, that 'the hire of the labourers,' which is 'kept back, crieth, and the cries are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth'?"

"There's more than the 'hire of the labourers' that cries," said neighbour Gascoigne fiercely, being of one accord with my father. "There's the blood of innocent souls all over the land, the black walls of that great prison-house off yonder, and the spirits of our daughters that haunt the *parc aux cerfs*. There's more than a paltry bit of gold to cry, neighbour Beaupré."

"Yes," said my father, slowly shaking his head while he finished his broth. "But God lives; there'll be a reckoning some day."

"Oh! the 'darling Mother Mirabeau' will make all right,"



said neighbour Gascoigne cheerfully. "He will reckon for us."

"A reckoning!" that was what Henri had said. There was something in the word which chilled my blood. It is dreadful to join God with human reckonings or with human sacrifices, as though either could be pleasing in His sight who has said, "Vengeance is mine."

I slipped away to my tasks, and as I worked I thought of my father with a heavy heart. He does not care for God as Henri does, and I. He never mentioned that blessed name until he began to seek for curses on the queen and the aristocrats, and to search his Bible for promises of vengeance. Since this is all he seeks there, this seems to be all he finds: for I have heard it said that one always will find in God's blessed Word the very thing one is seeking. If one looks to find God only as a judge, one must miss the blessing of his fatherhood.

I expected that my father would come home ill that afternoon, and so he did. Yet for all that, having the natural stubbornness of a man, he would not go to his bed, but had me kindle a log in his little chamber; and there he sat glowering above the fire. He would even have me bring him the plans for some alterations on her majesty's *conservatoire*, that he might look them over. I ventured to ask if he had heard the king's speech.

"The king's speech!" he repeated with a bitter laugh. "The king is a fine speech-maker. But you can't cure ills like ours with possets, child. Cut off the limb, and perhaps the patient may do better."

Now what my father meant I cannot say, but I answered gravely enough, "Surely since the States-General is the voice of all the people, it should be able to cure all evils."

"Well, daughter, *you* may think so," said my father shortly; "women folk are never very wise: besides, wiser heads than yours have thought the same. But while the aristocrats and the Bishops of Rome hold the helm, there's more likelihood



that the ship will run aground than sail safely into port. They bicker and squabble like children over their play. One will not do this, and another that, though the good ship goes to pieces. Your grand ones will never join hands with the people, man to man—curse them ! They'll have naught to do with the grass-eating *canaille*, but to grind their faces."

"O father ! quit cursing," I cried ; "leave vengeance to God. Besides, you forget the good Duc Philippe, and the good Count Mirabeau, and other nobles who have human hearts."

"Ay, count them on thy fingers, Manon," he said. "Mirabeau is the 'right wheel' of affairs, in good sooth. He himself knows the meaning of *lettres de cachet* and king's tyranny."

Then, seeing my downcast face, he drew me toward him and began stroking my hair, telling me that I was growing like my mother. Thank God for that ! He bade me not to charge my shoulders with such cares as these ; and indeed, knowing him so well, I cannot help but hope that he sees the darkest side : there must be brightness somewhere.

June 1789.

Yes ; there must be brightness somewhere, I am sure, if one were on a mountain-top, where one could have a wider view. "Clouds and darkness" are round about God's throne, but there is light behind them.

All things seem awry to us who are among them. The king surely seems to mean us well. He sent letters through the land to say that he wished his people to talk to him heart to heart and tell him all their troubles. But lo ! almost before the word had gone forth, the people rise to set their troubles right themselves. My cousin Annette smiles grimly, and says that the people have been fed long upon promises ; they began to think that if they did not help themselves no power on earth would help them. She is from Caen, and knows how one suffers in the provinces. The people groan under their burdens like Israel in Egypt.



They say there are no finer roads in any country than ours in France. I would to God the roads were not so fine, so they were not made by stolen labour, and so the labourers were but better fed. The great lords with their *corvée* will not even let the women and little children abide at home. Everywhere a hedge is placed about the poor, but not to guard them as God's hedges do. The game laws cause the greatest misery. God made the birds, but the king has given them all to the seigneurs ; and the life of a pheasant is more precious than the life of a man. Where deer and wild boar abound these huge creatures roam at will, destroying the crops, and endangering human life. Yet if any poor man's anger rises to such a height that he ventures to kill a wild boar in his own corn-field, he will repent his rashness at the galleys or in some dungeon where God's sunlight never comes.

The poor must purchase salt whether they will or no—so much a year ; but if, being weak of conscience and poor of purse, one contrives to smuggle a little, one has the galleys for reward. Now smuggling is a grievous sin, and not to be commended ; yet many are tempted beyond their strength, and men will brave much who are starving and dress in rags.

The grand seigneurs it is who eat the fruit of the field, who have their fine châteaux from north to south in the midst of little kingdoms. When the vintage is ripe, or the harvest is gathered in, they have so large a share that little else is over. They hunt, they feast, they travel over their beautiful roads, and above all, they have their dungeons in every château for those who fail in yielding up their all.

These things weigh sorely on my heart.

And now, in these days, there is much talk of brigands ravaging the land. No one can tell whence they come, and a strange mystery seems to wrap them about. They appear and disappear in ghostly fashion like an army of *wraiths*. On this account there is great call to arms, and bands of men are drilling everywhere to fight these ghostly brigands. But for my part,



I have little faith in ghosts ; and as for my father, he smiles grimly to himself, and says that the country will have a fine army presently to match the king's foreign hirelings.

Annette showed me a letter from her father only a few days ago. He says that the people are beside themselves with hunger—that they seize grain where they may, and care little for the lives of those who hoard it. The poor peasants ! they have never been pitied themselves, and now they too are pitiless. If they had but waited a little, until the good king and the States-General could have fed them !

Bands of thieves and smugglers and desperate men have been leading the poor misguided peasant folk to sin ; and it is these men, through whom the people have gone mad, who must give account to God. I am sure that my uncle, being a quiet man and not rash in judgment, can see things more clearly close at hand than the wisest men who are far away, and who talk of brigands as though they were telling a children's fairy tale. Whoever the evil-doers may be, my uncle has them all about him, and he says, "Poor folk ! the Lord forgive them, for the yoke has been too heavy."

Now we hear it whispered that these "brigands," who have been burning châteaux and killing aristocrats, are making their way to Paris, to stir up wrath in other hungry hearts. I can well believe that they have come already. We need look no further for our brigands than this good city of Versailles. For since the last few days I see about the streets faces so full of sin that I am forced to turn away with horror and shuddering,—evil eyes which haunt my sleep, and which I tremble to think have even for a moment rested on me.

The poor in Paris have so long suffered for lack of food that they are driven wild, and have no need of evil counsellors. My father feels so sorely at their misery that he says he is glad to see them rousing up like men. At the Palais Royal the poor folk are so wrought upon, and so eager each to say his word, that some have even dropped down dead through sheer



excitement. Henri saw one poor fellow fall but yesterday ; there was no cause for his death, they said, but sympathy and exaltation. These people do not use mincing phrases when they speak of the Comte d'Artois and the Polignacs, and they join her majesty's name with such harsh epithets that my father will not even tell me of them. It is just as though the whole city were in flames, and all men are abroad. The very hope of greater liberty seems to have driven people to greater anger against all who stand against them. One poor soul was dipped in a muddy pool but yesterday, and fairly rolled in the mire of the street, and another was beaten by the *poissardes* until the blood flowed from her wounds,—and all for some foolish freak which no one understands. Liberty is a beautiful thing when the aristocrats alone are humbled by it ; but when it causes the poor to be abased, one cannot help suspecting it.

I love the people, but I had rather keep from Paris while such injustice reigns. It seems a sort of terrible retribution that châteaux should be burnt and aristocrats put to flight ; but freedom that works against itself is a sorry freedom indeed.



V.

MAKING AN ENEMY.

MARGUERITE'S JOURNAL

May 1789.

ON Monday last the court followed in triumphal procession to grace the opening of States-General. Alas! that was a dinner of bitter herbs to my lady; and well she may find it so. A king should *never* yield; yielding a little is the same as yielding all.

Her majesty's sorrow is not that the people should be comforted; that would be a childish sentiment, though there have been men so foolish as to charge her with it. But being a brave woman who loves her husband, she is grieved to see him humbled and his subjects like conquerors dictating terms to their king. All the world knows the fate of that *Anglais*, Charles I., and what he gained by yielding to his people.

As for the *fête*, the day was fair, and there were many gracious cavaliers on every hand. They say there is a skeleton at every feast, yet people laugh and are merry.

Something occurred early on that Monday morning which seriously annoyed me. Annette had but just clasped my gown, after telling me, with much regret, that my bodice had not yet arrived, when suddenly a page announced that a messenger wished to speak with me in the grand gallery.

"Ah, madame! it is doubtless a mistake," said Annette: "the maid can answer questions as well as the mistress. I shall go for madame."



"The man will see none but my lady," said the page, with wide astonished eyes and his mouth agape.

And I, curious beyond reason, and with my hair but half powdered, followed down the great stairway, only to find that lover of Annette's with a message about my bodice. I could have cried for shame that I had run at the summons of such a low-born fellow, when I had looked to meet a gallant cavalier. Moreover, he was not even humble in addressing me, but held his hat with the air of a marquis. A prince of the blood, I trow, could not have shown a prouder bearing. I don't know what I should have said, being angered at such self-assertion in the very palace of his majesty, had I not at that very moment espied from behind a pillar close at hand a pair of evil eyes which glared maliciously upon me. I knew that Henri Beaupré saw them also, for the blood rushed suddenly to his face, and he started forward with an exclamation of anger.

Of course all the city has leave to swarm through the palace, but no one has leave to stare with such insolent eyes at one of the queen's ladies. The mockery in the face of that *scélérat* was greater than any woman with a human temper could endure. Before my grand cavalier had even time to put his impulse into action, I had motioned to one of the guards to take that evil creature in charge and send him from the palace. I marked a grim smile upon the face of the *garde française* who did my bidding, and he handled his prisoner with needless courtesy, and with an air of "By your leave, monsieur," which was most offensive. So I beckoned Henri Beaupré aside, within the doorway of the chapel, and listened with small show of patience to what he had to say, being stirred with such indignation that I longed to escape and cool both my temper and my cheeks.

He lingered still, as though there were words upon his lips which he was pressed to say.

So I asked somewhat coldly, "Monsieur Beaupré, the business you had with me is now concluded, I think?"



"I beg madame's pardon," he answered, not abashed by my coldness. "If I may risk giving offence, I should like to speak one word."

"If you give *occasion* for offence, I shall be offended, Monsieur Beaupré," I replied.

"That is my venture," he answered, with much assurance of manner. "These are not ordinary times, madame, and a lady who is not afraid of making enemies may find that even *canaille* are excellent haters."

"You speak in riddles," I answered carelessly, "and I never can read them. If you mean that I should have been more patient, then know that I have noble blood, monsieur, which will not brook an insult."

He drew himself up proudly and looked down upon me, being so much taller. Though his face was stern, there was an expression of tenderness in his eyes which was quite unpardonable. For since this man could never by any possible flight of fancy imagine himself my equal, there could be only one ground of reprieve—that he did not know what his eyes were saying.

Thinking of it now in a calmer mood, I can believe that there are many men who have such reverence for womankind that they would look with just such tender eyes upon a *poissarde* or a *dame de la halle*, whom they found in any danger, only because she wore a woman's face.

At the moment I was too angry fairly to weigh the matter for excuse.

"I should rather have knocked down that insolent fellow myself," he said; "and by your leave, madame, I was about to do it, when you took away my opportunity. No one could have borne *you* malice for a deed of mine."

"And what is this to *you*, Monsieur Beaupré?" I answered hastily. "You are an utter stranger to me; you have never seen me before to-day: why does it concern you that a mere *scélérat* should bear malice toward me? Do you think that I



shall give it a thought, or that I wish you to espouse my quarrels?"

Although I did not raise my voice, my indignation was very great; and he waited patiently until I paused before he answered. His voice was quiet, but there was a certain quality of power in it which compelled me to hear him through.

"I am a stranger to you," he said, "that is true; but it is not true that I have never seen you, madame. I have seen you as a nameless vision many times. I know also that you have a kind heart, though you would like to keep that fact concealed; the poor little ones by the wayside know it also."

"How dare you tell me this?" I cried in haste, the blood mounting to my face through anger. "How dare you, monsieur, to watch my comings and my goings, and make a vision of me?"

To this he made no answer for a moment, but stood looking quietly upon me. He was not disconcerted; he even smiled a little. I doubt not he had the presumption to believe, like others of his sex, that the superiority of his manhood over my womanhood outweighed any question of rank or blood between us. How strange that Frenchmen, of all others, will cling to such an old tradition, when the very king and queen are every day disproving the truth of it! After a moment he asked me in his turn,—

"How do you dare, Lady Marguerite, to address the saints and ask them to pray for you?"

"Monsieur Beaupré," I answered coldly, turning to depart, "if you are what I think, then the dear saints, and even the holy Mother herself, are nothing to you."

"But the good God is," he answered, "and his Son Jesus Christ."

He was so gentle and grave that my conscience reproached me for my anger.

"I will pardon you, Monsieur Beaupré," I said, "because of your good intentions. But it is really no concern of yours though I should have a foe upon the corner of every street."



"The angels of God defend us from our foes." I gave him my hand, which he raised with much reverence to his lips. He might almost have thought me Sainte Marguerite herself, save that he smiled: one does not smile, I think, in praying to a saint.

"Madame," he answered, "though you should never give another thought to that fellow, yet believe me he will recollect you. I pray you not to gain the hatred of another such as he."

And that was really all that passed between us, yet it seemed so strange that I have written it down. When I mentioned the affair to her majesty, she shuddered, and put her arms about me, scolding me in a gentle fashion for having drawn upon me the wrath of such a creature as that. But for my part, I am less grieved at this than at the fact that I should have been drawn against my will into familiar converse with one so far beneath me as Henri Beaupré.

Well, let it pass; it is not worth a second thought. If I had been a *bourgeoise* maiden now—but one cannot, even in fancy, stoop so low as that; it is like fancying that one could cease to exist. But *if I were* a *bourgeoise* girl, with such a lover, very likely I should envy neither Marguerite de Clairac nor even her gracious majesty. Poor dear lady! little enough has she that one should envy her. And after all, when one thinks how many sorrows go to make a queen, what better kingdom can there be than one of love, in which even *bourgeoise* maidens may be crowned?

It takes little to make one happy at one-and-twenty, and I had two sources of joy that day. The first was a letter from my father, for which I had been long in waiting; and the second was the fact that the soft spring-like air had chased away a heavy cold which was threatening to send me to bed. Madame Campan will have it that her vile physic worked the remedy; but that can hardly be, except by witchery, since I threw the vial secretly from my window.



I was happy, also, because I was allowed to be present at the queen's toilet; and save for the tears in her eyes, I never saw her more beautiful. I suppose, when all is said, that since States-General have met before, and will doubtless meet again, there is no reason to grieve, as though they should put an end to all things. If I were king—a *real* king, who was not governed by States-General—I should pass a law that every one should be merry. It is some old heathen writer, I think, who says, "A merry heart is as good as a medicine." I think it is *better*.

I think Madame Fleurange is the wisest counsellor after all. "Her majesty takes things too much to heart, my dear," she said yesterday to me. "It would be enough to wear Saint Gabriel himself to a shadow, such excessive grief. As to the dauphin, poor little angel! he is far better in heaven than here; while all these little matters of popular tumult will quiet of themselves, like the waves of the sea. Her majesty scatters her sweet words and her smiles too freely. If a child is wayward, you frown, and it grows penitent. And so I told her majesty."

However, I will say in passing that Madame Fleurange rode in the carriage with me in that triumphal procession, and I could not forbear the thought that she herself was not following the counsel which she had given her majesty. I watched her turning continually from side to side, and nodding to the crowd with her vivacious smile. Ah, Sainte Marguerite, what a crowd there was, and how graciously madame saluted! But then, being a simple lady in ordinary, I suppose she does not look upon the *canaille* as rebellious children whom she must repress with her frowns. In good sooth they needed repression, for they fairly thronged the way, and the *gendarmes* failed to keep them under due control. It made one almost seem to be a part of the multitude to be mingled with them in such humiliating fashion.

The next day I was present at the opening of States-General;



and that reminds me of something else. My father wrote to me that he was pleased to accept M. de Nesle as a son-in-law ; his majesty also approves : and this was why, I suppose, that we—M. de Nesle and I—had a few words together in the garden on Monday evening. Of course one cannot help knowing things, and I had known well that he loved me. I never fancied him above another ; but I was never given to fancies, and love on one side is not quite enough. Yet, if one must be offered up in marriage at all, it is well that the sacrifice should be agreeable to his majesty.

However, I was fain to laugh at my lover's expense in the Salle des Menus that Tuesday morning. We were seated in the gallery awaiting his majesty's arrival, when M. le Marquis appeared. Now really he is not an ill-looking gentleman, having fine dark eyes and a grave, chivalrous air, not unlike M. de Fersen ; but, alas for romance ! his valet, from undue haste, had left one side of his hair unpowdered. Shade of De Noailles, what a sight was this in a lover come to woo !

Before I could compose my face, M. d'Arblay suddenly appeared upon the scene, and glared at M. de Nesle while he saluted me.

"I think you two gentlemen are well acquainted," I said ; "you need not regard each other with such astonishment."

Whereat we should have become quite merry ; but a hush ensued upon the opening of the king's speech which quickly sealed our lips. One might well be silent to listen to such noble words—such expressions of fatherly love. Yet there are people, I have no doubt, who would not be touched by the words of an angel. No sooner had his majesty ceased than a most ridiculous tumult took place. For it seems, as M. de Nesle took pains to show me, there has been some foolish contention among the deputies of the *tiers état* as to whether they, like the *noblesse*, might not wear their hats in presence of his majesty. So, as soon as the speech was ended, each of those



turbulent creatures hastened to don his own slouched hat almost before the king had an opportunity to replace his own *chapeau*. It was all arranged with malicious foresight, as every one could see. And such a shouting ensued—such shrieks of “Couvrez!” and “Découvrez!” as I never had even dreamed of. No one need ever speak to me again of *womanly* folly after such a wonderful display of manly weakness.

His majesty being in a daze at the tumult, and not fairly understanding whether he were king or no, was fain to make peace by doffing his own royal hat, and the sitting ended with a fair show of good-humour on all sides.

But for my part, I could but wish that the Great Louis himself had been there—in boots and riding-whip, as when he entered the grand chamber and scattered the rebellious parliament. One flash from his eye would have taught those *canaille* right speedily whether it were “Découvrez” or no.

There was a flush of indignation on M. de Nesle's face which well became him; but as we passed through the gallery, I marked a lurking smile in the corner of M. d'Arblay's mouth, and I mistrusted it.

“Monsieur d'Arblay,” I said in an undertone, “I don't think your heart beats quite steadily.”

“What would you prescribe for heart trouble?” he asked, with a look of intelligence at me.

“A little loyalty,” I answered coldly; “less sympathy with this popular commotion.”

“I see,” he answered: “you speak of my heart in its public relations. If you could look within it, you would see that it always beats truly and steadily for you.”

“And the king?” I asked, casting my eyes upon the ground that I might not seem to read the meaning in his smile.

“Truly for you, *and* for the king,” he answered.

“Monsieur d'Arblay,” I said then with some indignation, “there is no question of myself in such a matter as this.”

Her majesty says I am wrong to harbour a doubt of “that



good D'Arblay, who is true as steel." But in these days many wear smiling faces who have disloyal hearts; and how is one to know in whom to trust? I am quite sure it is only the goodness of her own heart which makes her majesty so trustful.

Ah, well! the sun shines still, and life is not *all* a desert. When one is young, one can always find one's happiness.



VI.

*IN FORBIDDEN PLACES.*

YES, the sun still shone in those soft days of spring, and for many like Marguerite life was still beautiful even in turbulent France. "The time of the singing of birds had not lingered, and the flowers had bloomed heedless of the scarcity of bread. Hope still lived even for a challenged royalty; but those wretches in the provinces, trying to live upon 'meal-husks' and 'boiled grass,' or the poor Parisians with their 'drastic bread' which 'acted like slow poison,' had ceased to find beauty in the spring time. And little joy was left to those who, tenderly reared as Marguerite herself, had fled in the dark nights of that same year from burning châteaux, leaving their dead behind them. The sunshine does not gladden desolate hearts, though the 'time be May-time.'"

There were many as young and amorous of life as Marguerite who were dying of hunger in that famine year, which ran from summer to summer, and which drove strong men to desperate deeds. There were more rebellious hearts in France than royalty had dreamed. True, King Louis knew that his people were suffering; he had even in some measure denied himself to satisfy the cravings of that insatiable public appetite. But what can a king who fares daintily understand of self-sacrifice or of the actual meaning of hunger? His utmost self-denial might deprive him of some superfluous château, but would not diminish the number of dishes on his table or of carriages at his command. And when all was said, his sacrifice would go



such a little way toward feeding twenty-five millions. Could he have comprehended how one felt who stood in line, as they were doing daily in Paris, for a scanty portion of wretched bread, his sympathies would have grown wider and his heart more compassionate.

For sympathy is the power to take the sorrows of others into our own hearts and make them ours. Many fail in this who are not of noble blood.

Moreover, this was the hunting season, and the king had little leisure to give to such trifles as local *jaqueries*. Perhaps no one had ventured to tell him that his own troops were refusing to fire on the rioters, or that, being likewise ill-paid and hungry, they were even swearing brotherhood with them. France was fast becoming a nation of soldiers, who were not the king's, but armed for the nation's quarrel. While his majesty hunted, the world moved on, and he was left behind it. King Louis was doomed to discover that this people of his was like the ancient sibyl, yielding less as it demanded more; and that every delay in doing what was wise or most expedient made it less possible in the end for him to act the king.

Thus, after many priceless opportunities had been sacrificed on the altar of precedence, the day dawned when the *tiers état* declared that they alone—the lowest of all—were the *National Assembly*; and by this simple declaration drew nobles and bishops, and at last the king himself, to follow at their leading.

On one of those days, while the *tiers état* were still sitting and waiting, and while everything was in a state of quiet fermentation, Marguerite slipped out from the palace on a remarkable errand. She took a valet with her in attendance. Yet even with this restriction the novelty of the adventure pleased her fancy; and the hackney-coach which she entered was more diverting than the costliest state equipage. Her errand was not an urgent one: she had a little business with Manon Beaupré, which could surely have awaited its opportunity. She had also a strange inordinate curiosity, which she



had never mentioned to a living being, to see how people lived who were not aristocrats ; and to discover, if she might, whether all that Annette had told her of black bread and kindred evils had any foundation in truth.

The dingy, ill-kept streets repelled her a little, but she persevered in her search for old André Beaupré's house, and alighted with good courage when she found it. A rough-looking woman opened the door, who seemed to Marguerite's fancy more repellent than the streets. Yet although Manon was not at home, this determined little lady, nothing daunted, walked directly in. The valet, *les épaules haussées*, followed her into the entry-way, and there remained.

Marguerite penetrating further still, found old André Beaupré seated in a deep wooden arm-chair in the little living-room. A severe attack of rheumatism had imprisoned him ; and his face, as Marguerite paused a moment in the door-way and gazed upon it, was not one to invite her further. It had not only the look of present impatience at suffering and restraint, but the face itself was seamed with many passions and much adversity. His eye was still keen, however ; and his right hand, which grasped a stout oaken stick, was brawny as that of a young knight-errant.

André Beaupré was never a sweet-tempered man ; and now he had the consciousness of latent strength and all the accessories of action joined to the surety that something over which he had no control limited his power and his freedom. While he chafed against this intangible something which men call disease, he heard a soft stir in the outer passage, and caught the tones of a voice which was sweeter than Manon's. But when the opening door revealed Marguerite's form, he seized his staff with a closer grasp, as though an enemy had confronted him.

The face before him had such rare sunlight in it, that even his stout old heart might have felt some relenting, had it not been for the haughty carriage of Marguerite's head ; and the motion with which she drew aside her costly robes, lest they



should come in contact with the white-washed walls, made him harder than the "nether millstone." On her part there was no wish to give offence, only an instinctive shrinking from whatever seemed unsightly.

Old Beaupré tried to rise, but the sudden pain caused by the effort made him wince.

"Thou art astray," he cried snappishly; "here is no place for birds of bright plumage. This is an abode of honest folk, who have naught to do with painted women of the court. Here are no gold or favours, only righteous poverty and humble self-respect."

But the Lady Marguerite not being of a timorous nature, seeing also that through some infirmity the old man was chained to his chair, advanced into the room, courteously inclining her head, though she looked well about her. How did the *canaille* live? was the question. Such a close little room, with bare floor, and small uncurtained windows! The smile faded on her lips, and her heart was touched with pity.

"May the saints help you, good father! I am not painted, as you may see," she cried, laughing, and vigorously rubbing her cheek; "neither am I a witch. I bring no malison. I only wish to speak with the little Manon."

The old man groaned helplessly, and sat gazing in silence, while she looked about for a seat. Finally, from behind an antique writing-table in a far corner she drew a chair of quaint device, upon which Manon had fastened a cushion of tapestry.

"I am not come to intrude upon you, monsieur," she said, seating herself as far as possible from her discourteous host. "I might have let Annette do my errand, but she seemed so ill this morning that I sent her to bed."

The door which the valet held ajar let in a draught of air upon the irate old man, and seeing this Marguerite quietly rose and bade him close it. "I had a little affair with Manon concerning some broidery," she continued then.



The old man smiled grimly, then fell back in his chair with a gesture of impatience, and said, "Oh ay! Thou art the fine lady who commands the wise Annette. So—so. I have heard some prattling of your ladyship. If the king keeps his road, you'll have small need of broderies, madame. There is an end to all things."

She shrank back with an unconscious movement of both fear and gentle defiance, and eyed him curiously. "Why should I cease to want broderies?" she asked, with a soft laugh which had trouble in it. "Why should I not want beautiful things so long as I have a beautiful face, monsieur?"

"Ay, so long as thou *hast*," he repeated grimly. "Is it just that one should have broderies while others live on straw? The wheel of fortune goes round and round, madame, and in the end the good Lord metes out his rewards and his vengeance with an excellent justice. Perhaps you never heard of people who eat grass—*grass*!—think of that! And how do you think the Lord likes it, as he looks down from heaven, to see his good children eating grass, while you fare on dainties?"

"I cannot help the ills of others," she answered softly, with a sort of sweet amazement in her eyes. "I should be glad to feed all France, if *one* could do it. I know there is great scarcity of food; but I never heard of people eating grass. Sainte Marguerite, how terrible!" And then she added, turning upon him quickly, "Neither do I believe it—it is quite impossible. These are idle tales, such as one tells to children."

"Ah, you don't believe it!" he cried with a bitter laugh. "Then, of course, you never thought of going without your satin broderies, that some thousands of poor people might have bread. You are only the tool of a selfish queen, who has you in her clutches."

Old Beaupré's rancour was all the greater that he had that very morning refused to take charge of some re-arrangements in the Salle des Menus in preparation for a royal sitting which should oust the National Assembly. It angered him that any



should suppose him capable of dealing falsely by that band of patriots in whom the nation's hopes were centred. He cared not for queen's work, nor court work, nor even for kingly favour that morning.

The colour rushed vividly to Marguerite's face at his last words. "I care not if you revile *me*," she answered hastily; "it amuses me—it can do no harm; but I may not listen in patience when you speak disloyal words of her majesty."

"Very well, my lady," he answered with a gruff laugh, "listen with patience or not, as you will. So long as you sit there and I am fastened here, you *must* listen. Why you care to debase yourself by coming under the roof of a carpenter none but yourself can know, or a woman like you. *Parbleu!* with the freaks and whims of a woman it takes a brave man to deal."

"I do not despise carpenters," she answered quite serenely. "The blessed Saint Joseph was a carpenter, and also our dear Lord."

"Don't invoke any Popish idol under my roof, madame," he answered shortly. "We are free from Pope, and we mean to be free from king come another year. *Ça ira*. No saint but the blessed Saint Nation for me."

"Do you believe in nothing?" she asked, with a bewildered gaze. "Cannot even the blessed Lord enter under your roof?"

"Oh, I believe enough!" he answered grimly. "I have not gone so far as some others about me. I believe in a God of justice, madame—a God who 'puts down the mighty' and 'exalts the downtrodden.'"

"Ay," she answered quickly, and with a curious little smile; "but it was the mother of our Lord who spoke these words; and the good abbé has often told me that it is the *meek* whom God exalts."

"Make sure, then, that *thou* shalt never be exalted," he retorted angrily. "All your beauty will count for nothing when the worms shall devour it."



Marguerite rose with a flush of indignation and turned to go.

"So," he said quickly, "thou hast faith in that Austrian queen. Perhaps she also is a saint—blessed Saint Jezebel, eh?"

Marguerite's eyes flashed; she opened her lips to speak, when suddenly a quick girlish laugh came from behind the folds of a piece of tapestry which half concealed a doorway on the right.

"*Sainte Jézébel! c'est bien!*" cried a woman's voice in smothered tones, as though the speaker made an effort to suppress her words.

Marguerite shrank back instinctively. There was something almost unearthly in this sudden invisible speaker—all the more that the voice seemed not unfamiliar to her; she might almost have said, if that were possible, that she had heard it before.

"Art thou frightened?" said the old man grimly. "We have ghosts hereabout, madame."

"Oh no," she answered with the softest vehemence, and gathering up her draperies to depart, "I am not frightened by disloyal speeches. I have always known that there was much evil in the world. If the queen herself had heard, she would have replied with the compassion of an angel. I am not the queen, only her hot-tempered handmaid; but I will say adieu, monsieur, and pray the blessed saints to give you a more loyal heart."

"Oh, stay a little while," he answered with quiet irony, yet with something of amusement in his voice which made it more kindly than before. "We have only ghosts, madame; there are no wolves or savage beasts behind the tapestry. We will not harm you; we do not pour our thunders on butterflies like you."

But Marguerite had borne so much that the scene had long ceased to be one of amusement to her; the humiliation of it forced itself upon her keenly. Even in her wildest dreams she had never thought of suffering such insult to her dignity.



She had felt so secure in her own exaltation—like a star which might shine upon all things, yet never be abased or defiled. Marguerite was fond of shining—of blessing the world beneath her with her smiles.

Now she had learned her lesson. There was a touch of disdain in her manner as she drew aside her draperies ; but in spite of all her brave appearing the tears were in her eyes.

It was then, as she reached the street, and felt the breath of the soft spring air upon her face, that she was suddenly confronted with Henri Beaupré. Her lashes glittered with tears, and every tear burned like a drop of fire upon his brave young heart.

"Monsieur Beaupré," she said coldly, "I came here to speak with your sister. Will you have the kindness to send her to me?"

"I hope, lady, there has been no annoyance in your waiting!" he asked quickly, the sudden joy and wonder which he felt at her presence being checked at the sight of her tears.

"Oh, it is nothing!" she answered, her face flushing quickly.

"You should not have entered this house, madame," he said; "it is no place for you in times like these." But even then the beating of his heart gave the lie to the words which he had spoken.

Marguerite, who felt compromised, though she could not have given the reason, drew herself back with a look of pride ; and the words that she spoke would have seemed bitter, only that her heart was too true and tender for her voice to seem unkind.

"Truly it is no place for me, or any loyal woman, monsieur," she said, "since I have been forced to hear her gracious majesty covered with reproach."

A dark flush rose to his forehead, but he answered calmly enough, "The time may come when I can prove to you, madame, that her majesty has no truer friend than I."

"Surely I hope it may be so," with gentle scorn ; "but loyalty is shown by deeds, and not by words, monsieur."



When she had swept past him with a nod of her beautiful head, and entered her hackney-coach, he still stood gazing after her, as though her scorn had dealt him some cruel wound. Yet surely, from an aristocrat like the Lady Marguerite toward such as he, what could one look for but scorn—or indifference, which might be even harder to bear. As he entered the house, Annette sprang toward him and caught him by the shoulders, laughing merrily.

"Didst thou see my lady, Henri," she cried—"the little palace dame who trained her retinue here after her? Was she not a bold-faced little aristocrat to venture such a thing?"

Now Henri, being of a chivalrous nature, had always spoken to Annette with courtesy, and had been patient with her cousinly demonstrations; but this once he loosened her clasp with a gesture of indignation, and as he stood with folded arms regarding her, she saw anger and repulsion in his eyes.

"Be careful of your words," he said, when Annette paused at last. "I will not hear your lady or any woman lightly spoken of. How dare you, who are depending on her bounty, brave her anger?"

"I—oh, I did it not," she answered with a laugh; "it was your father, Monsieur Henri. I hid myself behind the tapestry, and heard the evil, discourteous words with which she provoked him. He did well to chide her. Do not *you* take up arms for such as that lady of mine, Henri Beaupré—a woman who counts her lovers by the score, and shakes them off as lightly as one shakes off the down of a thistle."

"I would take the part of any woman who was betrayed and insulted," he answered shortly, "were it by you or my father himself;" and as he spoke he looked through the open door at the silent old man.

"Tush, tush, my son!" said the latter with some relenting; "thou art hot-tempered as a boy. I but argued with the dame, and I swear there is no harm in her. It is not for such empty heads as hers that the vengeance will follow."



Annette, who should at this moment have been in her little room attending to her aching head, as her mistress had bidden her, still lingered in the doorway, and the smile upon her lips was a prophecy of mischief. Once she turned to go, and then, as though constrained by some hidden motive, turned again. Henri and her uncle were talking as men who have no desire to quarrel, but who hope to reach a common vantage-ground. It seemed as though she, Annette, were to bear alone whatever blame might be.

"Henri," she said then, in soft, persuasive tones, "I am sorry that you should so misunderstand me. You know I was in jest. I love my lady, but all the same I may laugh at her follies. One must laugh, or one would die."

Henri turned and regarded her gravely. It is but just to meet a penitent half-way, but such speedy penitence could not be taken without question. He was too keen-sighted for Annette's little games of sleight-of-hand to pass unchallenged. Sometimes they provoked a smile; now, when the honour of his house was at stake, he regarded them more gravely.

"I always thought you had a kind heart," he said; "I hope your tongue belies it sometimes, Annette."

Annette laughed, and turned to embrace her uncle.

"The dear old man knows that my heart is kind," she said, "though I speak hastily. Forgive me, Henri; and to show that you have no ill-will, walk back to the palace with me."

Henri frowned and bit his lip. He had no aristocrat blood in his veins, yet the principles of courtesy were deeply implanted in his heart. Blue blood and chivalrous instincts are not always bound together.

"Annette," he said then, as he walked away beside her, "I wish you would explain how you came to be here this morning, and not attending your lady."

"Have you puzzled over *that*, philosopher?" she answered laughing. "I do assure you all the same that I had leave to



come, not being well. I should have been quite recovered, but that my lady followed. But when she saw me, she was so angry at what my uncle had been saying that she would not suffer me to speak to her."

Henri knitted his brows. All aristocrats were lordly and exacting, both by inheritance and education; and believing this, even with bitterness, it was strange that he should have felt instinctively that he would put more trust in one look from Marguerite's dark eyes than in all the protestations of Annette. A man is not wont to rely with such confidence upon eyes which have never given him a glance of kindness.

Annette's story was plausible, yet, in spite of all, his wrath still burned within him. Her smile, however, became more confident, and a gleam of triumph shot from her eyes. Marguerite had too many lovers at her feet that this man should even worship her as a saint or angel from afar. Annette had no faith in the worship of human angels. Such things were well enough in poets' verses. The worship of an angel might change some day into the hopeless love of a woman, and she would save this cousin of hers from such a sad awakening.

On one of those pleasant afternoons, while rancour still reigned in the Salle des Menus, she came upon M. de Nesle in an avenue of the garden, and stepped demurely aside to let him pass. But as her face was well known to this gentleman, he stopped and greeted her kindly. Annette's dark face flushed at the courtesy. Like other women, she was keenly sensitive to both deference and scorn.

"I hope Mademoiselle Annette is well to-day," he said.

"*Parbleu!* it is rather madame my lady whom monsieur hopes is well," said Annette, with laughing eyes.

"Your lady is always well," he answered cavalierly; "the angel of health looks always from her eyes."

"I am glad that monsieur has hope of wedding so fair a goddess," said Annette.

The gentleman's eyes shone with pleasure. He was about to



pass on his way, when Annette remarked in a tone of feigned indifference,—

“My lady writes in a journal, monsieur, and she is very careless. She lets it lie about where one can read it.”

“Indeed!” he answered, pausing, with a shade of concern in his voice. “I hope that Mademoiselle Annette will guard carefully her lady’s secrets.”

Annette laughed. “My lady’s secrets are not state ones, monsieur,” she said. “Ah, *bah!* they are worth nothing. I thought, if monsieur chose, I might be able to discover, quite harmlessly, whether M. le Marquis has a place in the heart of this lovely goddess. There are many clamouring for places.”

The young man’s eyes grew darker, and the colour rose to his forehead. Probably, of the men of rank whom Annette had encountered heretofore, few would have had the honour to resist such a tempting proposal. It did not occur to Annette that her offer involved any crime, or that this man, with his interests so deeply concerned, would be able to resist it. For herself, she knew that M. de Nesle was a liberal man, and she liked him; and her bewilderment was very great when this quixotic cavalier came closer to her under the shadow of the overhanging branches, and answered in an undertone,—

“It gives me great sorrow, my good Annette, that you should think me capable of such an act of treachery. *Noblesse oblige!* and even if it were not for that, the good God sees all things.”

His voice was very kind. Annette, who would have shrugged her shoulders and laughed if another had spoken to her in such a serious fashion, felt her cheeks grow warm with something which was almost shame.

“For your own sake,” he continued, since she remained speechless, “keep always a true heart. There is nothing more beautiful under God’s heaven than a woman with a true heart.”

“I beg your pardon, monsieur,” Annette answered humbly. “Of course I am true to my lady. I think only of her best



interests; and I am sure I can wish nothing better for her than to be wedded to M. le Marquis."

M. de Nesle smiled. "If I spoke with reproof," he added, "it was because I had *your* best interests also at heart. I am sure the Lady Marguerite trusts you, and that you will deserve her confidence."

He spoke with a deference even in his disapproval which overawed the voluble Annette. She had never heard Solomon's words concerning the "wounds of a friend," but she felt that the sincerity of this man's reproaches made them of more worth than the pleasant flattery of others.

"He is a *noble man*!" she said to herself. "If all the aristocrats were like that, perhaps we should have had no need of States-General."



## VII

### THAT AFFAIR OF THE TENNIS-COURT.

#### MARGUERITE'S JOURNAL.

June 1789.

THE other day, while Annette was dressing my hair, I took occasion to tell her of a strange adventure which befell me when I went in search of Manon Beaupré—how I was forced to listen to traitorous speeches from a strange old man, and how some one behind the tapestry mocked me with insolent laughter.

"It was not Manon," I said; "yet I could have sworn I had heard the voice before. It was much like your own, Annette; but you were safe in bed."

"And I should never have mocked at madame," said Annette softly, looking much troubled at my story. "If madame had only told me," she added, "I would have gone gladly in her place. I would rather endure a thousand headaches than that she should be grieved. As to the voice behind the tapestry, that must have been madame's fancy. I shall take pains to inquire."

"Well," I answered coldly—for though Annette is a faithful creature, I wished to show her how I regarded the matter—"I shall always remember that one gets no better than insult for stooping beneath one's station." And I added in my own heart that the king himself would fare no better for seeking to court the *tiers état*—*canaille* will be *canaille* to the end of the world.



But now, in truth, I may say that the king also has begun to perceive, what every wise man must allow, that a spark of fire may be crushed out by the stamping of a foot or quenched by a breath of air, which, after it has waxed a while, all the fountains at Versailles cannot drown. May the good saints grant him the grace to continue in this mind! for there is small gain that one should be stout and brave *to-day*, if one yields to clamouring mob or parliament to-morrow.

The insubordination of the *tiers état* having reached such a height that no one could make peace or bring them to any right endeavour, the king at last resolved to hold a royal sitting, and decide the point at issue. Carpenters were set at work in preparation; and on Saturday morning, when the rebellious members had taken their coffee, and were assembled at the entrance of the Salle des Menus, they found the doors all closed and guarded, and were forbidden in the king's name to enter.

Surely that was some show of kingly resolution on his majesty's part; and that he has not seen his duty sooner was not through lack of counsel. M. d'Artois long ago begged him not to have States-General at all, if he could not have it to his liking; and though monsieur would not say so much aloud, I am sure he also has not been lacking in quiet protest. Even the sainted Madame Elizabeth has shaken her head in sage disapprobation. I myself overheard her saying to one of the court that rebellious subjects should be compelled into obedience, and that her brother would do well to cut off one or two heads while the remedy would avail him, and so save many more in the end.

We had such a merry time on Saturday morning watching that poor army of deputies paddling about in the mud of the avenue, like fallen angels thrust from their paradise. Of course they could not enjoy the little *plaisanterie* as well as we, who looked at them in dry garments from behind palace window-panes. I am sure even a reverend cardinal could not have refrained from laughter to see the consternation in their faces,



and to hear them make the very air resound with their murmurs and laments, while the rain poured down in torrents on their heads.

"They will soon tire of this," said some one at last; "rain is a wonderful thing to dampen the enthusiasm of the masses."

But the words were scarcely said when the crowd of rebels seemed fired with a new idea. They began plunging about more wildly still, and seizing each other by the button-hole; and before many minutes the whole wandering horde turned about as with one aim toward M. d'Artois's tennis-court. All the *canaille* for miles about followed in their wake, and we pursued them with our laughter.

But, alas! the merriment had scarcely ceased when M. de Ste. Marie, one of her majesty's guards, appeared with further news.

The dear Miomandre! how he raved at Parisian insolence, and the disrespect which had been shown toward the king. He became so eloquent in his anger that he drew tears to the eyes of all who heard him, although his own flashed fire.

But life is too short to shed tears: while one weeps one misses the sunshine, and doubtless the good God does not wish us to do that, although the saints all wept and had trials. If God did not send the trials, they went about and searched for them. Perhaps if one never wept one might never think of heaven, and therefore it may be a blessed thing that as one grows older one takes more comfort in tears.

But really there was no just cause for weeping when the king had gained his end; only, as M. de Ste. Marie said, there was a great tumult in the tennis-court, and the deputies were very arrogant. I remembered, too, that in other days, when the king thought he had conquered his parliaments, they had an odious way of rising strong as ever to defy him, as these deputies defied him now.

"The *canaille*!" cried Miomandre, "they are raving like madmen, and they swear not to part until they have made a



constitution. A constitution, forsooth! I wish his majesty would turn the cannon on them."

"Let us hope they love each other's company then," said I, "for they may be long together."

And amid public anxieties my own are not wanting. I wrote to my father yesterday that I was content to follow his wishes in regard to M. de Nesle. I would consent to anything rather than trouble him when he has so much to bear. Many a girl has been betrothed who never wedded, and there is much to hope for in the changes which time must make. One is always confident of this—that a man's heart being of such tough material, one cannot greatly damage it. Our blessed Church—both his and mine—teaches us to work for worthy ends, even though we should go a little astray in reaching them. It is a worthy end to make my father happy; and for the rest, if I must needs be wedded, I shall have time enough to be reconciled to my fate.

M. de Nesle promised to give me time, and he has been very patient. But last night, as I stood watching the full moon from an open window in the corridor, he came and asked me to walk in the garden with him. My heart began to fail me, for I knew the meaning of his words. I could not give a little without giving so much, and it is hard to give what one may not take again. M. de Nesle is a loyal gentleman, yet I always fancied I should like to be wedded for love, and also to wed a hero.

It is curious when a man begins to speak how many thoughts he seems to have that you would not have given him credit for.

The air was a little cool, and I noted well that although he had not had sufficient vanity to be conscious of the lack of powder upon his hair at the opening of States-General, he knew well that my mantle had fallen off, and hastened to draw it about my shoulders. Such little tokens take one at a disadvantage; they lay siege to the outworks of one's heart, and one cannot be quite cruel.

Perhaps he noticed also that my step was lagging; for when



we came to a sheltered corner, where the trees were closer, he found a seat for me. Then, instead of sitting also, he stood before me, leaning one arm on the low branch of a tree.

"Dear lady," he said, without more ado, "I think you must know what I have to say; and yet it is my greatest pleasure to repeat it."

If he had been another man, and less cool and self-possessed, I might have seen some cause to answer him. As it was, I could only smile and drop my eyes upon the ground.

"Your father, M. le Comte, has sanctioned my love," he went on; "and this fills me with joy. Even one's fondest wishes die if no one nourishes them. My heart would strengthen itself for many days upon a little hope, beloved."

My lord was not impetuous nor passionate. He spoke gently—a little reverently too—as though a woman might be akin to an angel. Some women are. I think he would make a tender husband to a wife who loved him. But so perverse am I that I believe I had rather a less eloquent wooing and a more impetuous lover. I had rather a man should not stop to consider his words when he is thinking of me.

"Monsieur," I said, as gently as himself, "I do assure you, as I did before, that I have always borne you much respect; and respect, as wise men tell us, with tender nurture may ripen into love. I desire also to content my father. I will give you hope, monsieur."

He took my hand and kissed it with words of thanks.

"But," I added, "since a woman's heart cannot be given and taken like a flower, have patience a little while, monsieur. Let me think a little longer."

"Only one thing I should like to know," he answered: "this woman's heart of which you speak—is it filled by any other image?"

And then I flushed crimson. "I do assure you, monsieur," I said, "that if this were the case, I should not even think of your proposal."



He begged my pardon in right humble fashion, and bending on one knee before me, again pressed my hand to his lips.

And so he has left me thinking ; but thinking is very wearisome when it concerns the happiness of one's lifetime. Of course every woman must be wedded, and one cannot always go on thinking about it. In these days love does not seem to be very needful to a happy marriage. I have questioned the queen's confessor upon that very point, and he has answered me most earnestly, that if a woman marries because it is her duty, she need have no anxious fear for the result.

M. d'Arblay darts such angry glances in these days, that if one only had enough of such artillery there were small need to plant cannon on Sèvres Bridge, or to point them on the National Assembly, as his gracious majesty has about resolved to do. The saints grant that, in the relenting of his heart which is sure to follow, he does not rather hand over both cannon and men as a peace-offering to the rebels. The good Louis needs, like the good Moses, to have his hands well holden up by her majesty and M. d'Artois. But then, being such an excellent king as he is, one must love him, even though he surrendered his court as well as his cannon.

Her majesty has sorrowed so that her hair is turning white. Her sorrow is not alone for the dauphin, who has gone, poor little soul ! to the angels. The little saint died in her arms, baptized with her tears ; and though he suffered like a martyr, he had strength to say that he was only in distress when he saw her weeping.\*

No ; other mothers lose their children who are not so brave as she, and she would not call that little sufferer back from Paradise.

It seems a bitter fate that after she has dried so many tears for others, and comforted so many hearts, her own tears should flow, and her heart be filled with foreboding. She has been a mother to orphans, and a friend to those who had no friend

\* Weber.



besides. I could not begin to tell of all her loving deeds—of the families she has supported, and the sorrows she has solaced by her sympathy. “If ever there was a tender-hearted woman,” my father used to say, “who can feel for the sorrows of others, that is our queen, the well-beloved.” For there was a time when it was truly said all Paris were lovers at her feet. Now, alas! the lovers have gone elsewhere a-wooing.

As to the glances of M. d’Arblay, I have discovered that in certain lights his eyes are *green*, so the light which flashes from them is green fire, lurid and deadly; for green is the colour of jealousy.

Henri Beaupré has far more beautiful eyes than those. They are very dark and changeable, with rare power of searching and of speech. I consider it a great gift when a man’s eyes can speak for him.

July 1789.

The king held his royal sitting, and he talked to the députés like a father. He told them—which was very true—that no king had ever done so much for any people as he had done for them. But he added—and this was not so true a word—that no people had ever so richly deserved the kindness of their king.

But though he offered them all they could ask, they were not content. For his majesty—King Necker—was not present at the royal sitting, and the people look with mistrust upon all which Necker does not sanction. So when no one would agree to the excellent plans which he proposed, his majesty, with the *hauteur* of the Great Louis, declared that he alone would effect the good of his people.

As to the rest, it is thought most dishonourable of M. Necker, after himself advising the king to hold his royal sitting, to leave him unsupported. But what better could one expect of a heretic Genevese? It is plain that he only wishes to entrap the king and elevate himself.

And no sooner had his majesty withdrawn from the Salle



des Menus, than the deputies of the *tiers état* set him at open defiance, and the people gave M. Necker a public triumph, as though he were the king. It is better not to speak brave words unless one has the courage to make them good—to promise to work out the good of the people unless one really has the power. There is some evil witchery about the whole affair, since even the nobles have humbly doffed their hats to the third estate; and now we have a National Assembly which laughs in the face of the king. It is absurd to find the old *noblesse*, who should know better, *entêtés* like children over the “sacred rights” of the people; as though the people had not always had their rights, and were not able to defend them.

M. de Nesle says that the whole land of France is ruled by a villanous mob; there is every day a St. Bartholomew of the *noblesse*. Even in the blessed Assembly, though men are slow to confess it, no man who falls short of heroism may dare to speak his mind, unless his mind is the mind of the *canaille*. For the mob throng all the galleries of the Salle des Menus, and the name of any deputy who dares to vote according to his allegiance to the king is instantly put on record, and passed from the gallery onward to that den of all evil, the Palais Royal. The poor hero is happy indeed if he escape even from the sitting unharmed. And this is not the end: there is no oblivion for a name thus branded; it never is forgotten. From the Palais Royal it is sent back to the province from which its owner came, where those who are dearest to him pay the penalty for his truth and courage. This is all true, for M. de Nesle has told me, though every one will not acknowledge it. One must follow his conscience at the risk of martyrdom.

There was one deputy more truthful and honest than others, who said quite boldly, but a day or two ago, that he yielded his mind upon a certain point solely because he was not “disposed to have the throats of his wife and children cut while he was absent from them.”\*

\* Taine.



We are returning to savage times, I think, when there was no right but that of the strongest. I said as much to M. de Nesle, and he replied with a sigh that without doubt things would presently straighten themselves, and the world would go on as it always had been going. *I think we shall wait long with folded hands if we wait for things to straighten themselves.* If this is the heroism of M. le Marquis, I am afraid it will not work wonders.

The Golden Age may have dawned upon us, as some men say, yet surely the "gods have not come down to dwell among men," nor the angels. There is always a mob of turbulent *canaille* infecting the very air. I never knew before how many wretched people there are in the world. M. Passeret, the king's secretary, is dead this very afternoon. His death, says the court physician, was caused solely by grief and fear, from the insults offered him this morning at the hands of the mob. I am right glad that his majesty has ordered up Royal Allemand and some other faithful regiments, that the palace may have more trusty guardians. For although the dear saints know I would not have the heart at other times to harm the meanest of God's creatures, yet when an innocent and kind-hearted man comes to his death through such atrocious deeds, it is quite time that some one should begin to harm the doers of them.

I had rather die than reign over a kingdom such as this, where innocent men are murdered on every hand and no one dares avenge them.



## VIII.

### *THE BALL IN THE ORANGERIE.*

ONE clear night in the middle of that same July—a night long to be remembered—there was a ball in the Orangerie at Versailles. Though the scene was as merry as such scenes were wont to be, yet there seemed a presage in the air that the hours for such vanities were numbered. It appeared to some carping souls as if even this might have been spared, with public matters at such a crisis and people dying of hunger. There are some who will always cavil about pleasures in which they have no share.

Versailles was aglow with light that evening. Obsequious courtiers still hovered about the royalty which was waning, while true hearts grew more loyal as the shadows hung more heavily. King Louis's countenance, so often heavy and dull, was for this time wreathed in smiles. In the midst of traitors true friends still remained; and he condescended to those about him with the pathetic dignity of a man whose star is waning. As to Marie Antoinette, in the midst of those who loved her she was always less queen than friend. The luxury of friendship might soon fail her; and if she had not looked this fact fairly in the face, the premonition of it may still have hung like a cloud before her future.

Marguerite stood near in waiting, but also with others waiting upon her—hanging as eagerly upon her laughing words as though they had been words of gold. Indeed she seemed so merry that night that one might have fancied her wit so shallow that



the veriest fool could fathom it. Yet from time to time, as one who watched her saw, her eyes turned toward the queen, and her smile as suddenly faded. She was talking at a venture, with but a dim consciousness as to who were vieing for her favour.

The man with the dark eyes who was watching her smiled as he noticed this. "The Lady Marguerite's thoughts are flying," he said at last; "she is with us bodily, but not in spirit."

She turned her head slowly, and lifted her eyes to the speaker's face. "I think all that there is of me is here, M. d'Arblay," she answered softly: "one has no *spirit* in such days as these. I am quite lost myself in sympathy with my queen."

"Do not lose your identity," he exclaimed; "of all losses we could sustain that would be the saddest."

He spoke in the manner of courtiers, yet with a ring of sincerity in his words. It may have been this which kept Marguerite from throwing off his flattery as lightly as she had done that of all the others. After a few moments she even took the arm he offered her, and began to walk slowly through the crowd. At this moment the eyes of the queen fell upon them, and the smile which suddenly lighted her face seemed to include both maiden and cavalier. The young man, who noticed this, and whose conscience was still alive, felt a thrust like the first symptoms of remorse. This was more remarkable, since nothing in his outward bearing seemed to call for such a sentiment. The lady who leaned upon his arm was dear to him beyond a question; yet the queen's smile was like an arrow in his heart.

The windows which opened on the garden were flung wide, and all the avenues were brilliantly lighted. As they went out into the soft air together the sound of music floated everywhere about them.

"Her majesty loves you very much," were the first words which he spoke, as they turned aside into a shaded path.



"Why, yes assuredly," said Marguerite, smiling archly; "although you seem to wonder at it."

"*I* wonder!" he exclaimed with instant courtesy. "I should not wonder if the wild beasts kissed your feet!"

"Oh! I don't care for protestations," she answered, a little coldly. "I am too absorbed in my lady's troubles to care for *bon-bons* for myself. If I were a man, monsieur, I would show you!"

"If you were a man, and a brave one, mademoiselle, you could do nothing against the current," he answered. "Being a woman, you can do less. Do not show such vehement sympathy, nor allow your tears to flow where they may be observed. Love the queen if you will, but do not make your love too manifest."

"Is that a *man's* code of honour?" she asked quickly; "or is it because you think women should be less honourable than men that you teach it to me?"

"I teach it to you because women are weak," he answered. "Have the wisdom to believe that your demonstrations of loyalty will never advantage the king, though they may do infinite harm to you."

She turned on him with quiet indignation, and replied: "When I love, M. d'Arblay, it is for life or death. No allegiance is worthy which one is afraid to avow. May the good God grant me a steadfast heart, that I may never conceal my loyalty or my love!"

"Happy the man who shall win them for himself!" he exclaimed half audibly.

But she eluded compliments when it pleased her, as wild birds shed the water from their wings.

"And even if the worst should come," she went on in earnest fashion, "and those rebels, whom you seem to favour, should drive the king from his land, I should count it my dearest joy to follow him. I am not afraid. Oh! believe me, I am not afraid!"



He was silent for a little, looking down upon her upturned face with a smile which was half-indulgent, half-reverent. "Did it never strike you, dearest lady," he said at last, in tones which were very gentle, "that even those rebels whom you denounce might have some cause for protest? For my part, though I am loyal to the king, my eyes are open to the misery beneath me. Great God, what misery! The king whom we love, dear lady, is paying the debt of his fathers. The wrongs of the people have been the growth of centuries, and royal smiles will not heal them now."

"Why should people store up hatred and pass it on to their children?" she asked vehemently. "Why remember evil kings when one has a good one on the throne?"

"There would be no need, perhaps," he answered, laughing at her earnestness, "if King Louis could deal hand to hand with each of his twenty-five million subjects who are trampled upon every day even now by his worthless nobles. The king's heart is kind, but he is too weak to frown upon tyranny and injustice."

"The king is not weak," she answered hastily, with a movement as though she would drop his arm; "but he cannot reconcile *all* differences. I cannot see why any one should complain with such a fatherly king."

"One is apt to complain who starves," he answered with quiet insistence.

"There is not a thing which they ask that he does not yield," she continued bitterly. "He had rather lay down his crown than shed a drop of blood. Shall I tell you why? The king adores his conscience. He is in constant fear lest God should see a stain upon it. He always looks further than *this*. You think him short-sighted! Why, monsieur, he sees further than any of his counsellors—he sees clear to God's judgment-seat! Now if I were king, I should turn the cannon on my rebels. That is what *he* thinks of at first, perhaps; but looking further he pauses, fearing that God will say to him some day, 'You



have shed the blood of your people.'” Her eyes were flashing; there was a thrill of vehement protestation in her voice.

D'Arblay was silent, not from want of words, but because he found himself more than ever established in his former faith—that it is useless to argue with a woman.

“I beg you will not think for a moment that I am disloyal,” he said at length.

“Oh no; I shall not condemn you for a few foolish words,” she replied indifferently. “There are people, like lawyers, who love to argue on whatever side. Truly no one could believe that one like yourself, monsieur, who had known the king's favour, could side with his enemies.”

If this were intended for a covert thrust the weapon seemed to miss its mark.

He led her to the edge of the terrace overlooking the grand avenue of Versailles. In the distance they could see the lights from the city of Paris casting a luminous haze upon the sky; yes, more than that, for the heavens seemed kindled into something like a glory—a light which flashed and quickened like some unearthly thing.

“Monsieur,” she said, “you spoke of unworthy nobles who oppress the people. I know a little about that. I remember how my father treated his people as though they had been his children; and I have heard him say that the nobles as a class had never been so ready as they are now to help and elevate the lower classes.”

“Don't trust them,” he said. “One good king and one good noble, or even two, what are they? Do you see that light off yonder? Just there the great black towers of the old Bastille lift their seven peaks to God—a mute protest against the cruelty of kings. The records of that old prison-house would bear me out in any statement I might make. The leniency of the nobles has not abolished oppressive taxes, and the kindness of the king has not led him to suppress the *lettres de cachet*, which could shut you and me for ever within those walls.”



"Oh! I know nothing of that," she answered evasively, "except what all the world knows. I know that prisons have to be. I know that men have done evil deeds, and have been punished for them. I have heard also of *lettres de cachet*, but they are a thing of the past."

"How many do you suppose his majesty, King Louis XVI., has granted out of pure kindness of heart, let us say, as favours to his friends? We should find it tedious counting them. Of course, his grandfather went far beyond him. My uncle was held in high honour in that atrocious court, mademoiselle. King Louis, the 'well-beloved,' granted him a great many favours; and, I am also grieved to say, the good old gentleman in his turn smiled at all the king's caprices, and laughed to scorn those who protested against the iniquity of *lettres de cachet*."

"That was because your uncle had a loyal heart," she answered quickly. "He knew that kings were given of God, and that the blessed Saint Paul himself bade us be in subjection to them."

"Oh yes, without doubt," said D'Arblay; "and certainly we have been obedient to that excellent saint. However, my uncle made an enemy of Madame de Pompadour herself; and so presently there was a *lettre de cachet* issued, which even his staunch loyalty could not make merry over."

"What became of the poor gentleman?" she asked breathlessly.

M. d'Arblay shrugged his shoulders. "God knows," he answered. "Even royalty failed to find his living grave."

"How terrible!" she exclaimed, her eyes dilating with wonder. "Was there no cause against him? Was he accused of nothing?"

"What need?" he answered bitterly; "is not the king in the place of God?"

"I am sure there must have been some grave misunderstanding," she continued gently. "Monsieur, I hope such things,



which are long past, and with which his majesty has naught to do, will not make you disloyal now?"

"Mademoiselle," he answered, "my *father* was so loyal that he watched in the ante-chamber yonder close to that wretched old king until he breathed his last, and he was almost the only one who was not *bribed* to stay."

She raised her eyes as he spoke toward the room where the old king, with his burden of unrepented sins, had laid him down to die.

"I think," she said in a soft voice, but still persistently, "that there are always errors on every side. None of us walk perfectly with God; and to show true loyalty under misfortune and wrong was the grandest deed of all. I know there are others who talk as you are doing, monsieur"—her eyes flashed as she raised them to his face—"Mirabeaus and D'Orléans, and others like them. I scorn them all. It is not the *people* whom they love, but themselves. For myself, monsieur, I had rather fall in the cause of God and the king than triumph with another. No man will find favour with me who takes counsel against his majesty."

He raised her hand with tender deference to his lips.

"God forbid that I should stand against the king!" he cried vehemently. "Truly, I believe, if *you* were on the side of the great arch-enemy himself, I could hardly venture to withstand you."

"Hush!" she whispered with a shudder, and hastily making the sign of the cross upon her forehead; "do not say such fearful words."

"I crave your grace and favour, dearest lady. I would lay down my life in the king's cause or *yours*."

"My grace and favour are for the king's cause," she answered laughing. "I have no favour to show for one who has not earned it."

"How can one earn it?" he asked.

"By showing zeal for the king," she answered absently.



"And may one who is zealous hope for special favour, Lady Marguerite?"

"Nay; I have no special favours to bestow, monsieur," she answered quickly, and as she spoke she looked off again toward the great city. "There must be a grand illumination," she said hastily, thinking more, it must be confessed, of the "special favour" for which she had been asked than of the unusual radiance.

"A bonfire perhaps," he answered evasively; but his manner became anxious, and of his own accord he turned her steps toward the palace. The music sounded still, and light feet were flying over the polished floors; but Marguerite would not dance. As soon as she could free herself from M. d'Arblay, she stole into the embrasure of a window, and screening herself behind the drapery, let her eyes wander dreamily among the checkered lights and shadows on the avenue. The sky, since the moon had vanished, seemed black by contrast; even the stars were invisible. "How God's lights seem to fade before those of men!" she thought; "yet it is only *seeming*."

The voices around her were low-toned and merry; the air was full of the fragrance of flowers; strains of music came softly from a distance. One would not look for skeletons at such a feast; yet Marguerite was conscious of some intangible discord. With sudden recollection she turned her gaze toward the direction of the great Bastille. The words of her companion seemed to weigh upon her mind. It *was* a horrible thing that innocent people should ever have been shut in from the sunlight; yet, of course, such things had been. She had never before thought seriously of the injustice of it. A sudden fear came upon her as she looked—a dread of some unknown evil. The light which had seemed but a luminous haze before had wondrously increased. The heavens shone far over the horizon, and the light seemed to flash and scintillate through the gloom of the night. What was doing there in Paris?

Suddenly, close at hand, she heard a group of gentlemen



conversing in low tones. "All this should at once be crushed," said one with scorn; "a strong hand could do it, and should have done it already. The whole city will be in arms while we stand and look on."

"It is not best always to appeal to force, monsieur," said another, who stood close at Marguerite's elbow; "impetuosity has ruined many a cause. This is merely a popular outburst, which will subside directly."

"Besides," said another voice, well known to Marguerite, "it is but a sharp medicine, when all is said. This violence of the *canaille* will prove the fallacy of all those new ideas—will make respectable people tremble, and draw all men closer to the king."

The man who had first spoken was silent, still wishing, doubtless, to turn the cannon upon the rebellious city; but one who stood near to the king as counsellor and friend answered with calm deliberation—"You are right: popular excesses always react, and ruin those that cause them. For my own part, I am heartily glad the cloud-burst has come at last: the sky will be all the clearer when it is over, and the spirit of rebellion will be sooner laid. This will prove to the gentlemen of the Assembly how much their new constitution will be worth."

"For myself," said the first speaker then, "I cannot descry so much as a premonition that your spirit of rebellion will be laid. The municipality grovel in the dust before the populace down yonder, and everywhere the vilest triumph."

Marguerite had listened eagerly. A revolt in Paris! How much did it mean? She had heard of such rebellions in other days, when kings were stronger and tumults could be crushed; but now?

The tears rose quickly to Marguerite's eyes. If her majesty had only gone to Austria, as the good emperor wished, and so were safe from danger! But after all, why should she be a coward for the queen? She loved her surely more than ever,



if that could be, for the brave words which she still remembered :  
"It is my *duty* to remain firm at the post where Providence has stationed me, and to oppose my bosom if necessary to the daggers of the assassins who shall attempt to strike at the king."

"And blessed be our lady!" quoth Marguerite softly to herself, "it is *my* duty to abide by the queen. It is well to see one's duty quite clearly. Whatever comes, that is all that I have to do—abide by my dear lady to the end."



IX.

*"À LA BASTILLE!"*

MANON'S STORY.

*July 1789.*

IT was one week ago to-day that my sister came from Paris with the little one, and begged that we—father and I—would go back and spend the Sabbath with her. For she has lately, because trade was so poor in the Rue Culture Ste. Catherine, removed her little store of goods to a shop in the Palais Royal. Her husband is still on the frontier; and in these days there is always such a commotion at the Palais Royal, that sometimes she cannot sleep for terror. Besides, there was to be a special service of prayer for the nation in our little Huguenot chapel, where the dear pasteur Leroy would preach, and she knew I would like to be there.

My father was not well pleased to go. He seems to think, dear heart! that the Assembly cannot act with him away. He told Lucile to close her ears, and keep a quiet conscience, and she would sleep soundly enough. As to the special service, he vowed the nation was doing bravely without it.

While we were wisely debating what course we should pursue, it chanced—rather I should say it was the will of the good God that Annette should suddenly appear. Being such an ardent patriot, she grew eager at once when Lucile spoke of the *Assembly* at the Palais Royal, which acts so much more speedily than the Assembly at Versailles. She would give worlds, she said, to be there. And when Lucile looked at her with wistful



eyes, she rose with much determination, saying that she would go and get leave of her lady.

And so in the end it was Annette and I who went to Paris with Lucile.

I saw Henri alone for a few moments before we left. He had seemed of late so silent and ill-disposed to remain at home, that his conduct caused me much trouble. I knew that Annette's lady had visited us, for I received a message which she left for me. I knew also, from certain words of her own, that her visit had not been a pleasant one. But why Henri should lose his temper over such a trifling matter had never been quite clear. God surely finds much in us which needs to be forgiven. Annette also had been distressed once or twice—fancying he would not remain at home because she was coming.

Now I have been well pleased at the thought that Henri loved Annette; and it was this thought which wrought with me to discover where the trouble lay. I longed to set things right again. There is so much misery in God's great world, and so little that one can do in recompense. So I said to Henri, "Annette and I have been troubled at seeing you so little at home the past two weeks. How is it, dear?"

"Annette and you!" he repeated with needless emphasis.

"She has been here three times, you know," I replied, "and each time has missed you, Henri. You surely are not grieving still. What is that fine lady to either you or me?"

"Grieving do you call it, Manon?" he answered coldly, filling his pipe as he spoke.

"Surely no one who is a follower of the blessed Lord," I continued, "does well to be *angry*, Henri. We are forbidden to let the sun set upon our wrath."

"You are right," he said; "I believe I have been angry. But other things also have kept me away from home."

"And now, for the Lord's sake, you will put your anger away?" I asked.

"Truly, Manon," he answered frankly, "in the face of such



reasoning I must needs. I am a poor servant, my sister; I need frequent pricking. But, God helping me, there is nothing I would not do for the sake of such a Master."

"I do not see," I went on gently, "why you should have been so vexed. One would have supposed there were some grievous cause to call for such indignation—as though you cared for this lady, who is the veriest stranger."

To my alarm Henri did not receive my words in the spirit that he should have shown, being penitent. He answered with cruel deliberation that I had spoken truly—he loved the Lady Marguerite with all his heart's devotion; and added that the humblest of the people were free to love the saints, who were so far above them.

Now it proves a frail and earthly spirit when foolish words have power to cloud one's peace. Yet one might almost have said I had righteous cause for anger, when one remembers that, for all her gentleness, the Lady Marguerite is a lover of that Austrian queen. And it was great cause for trouble that my own brother was throwing away the best love of his life as unavailingly as one would "cast pearls before swine." I longed to say, "Come out from among them, and be thou separate, and touch not the unclean thing." We are of the people; but our fathers for generations have been on the side of the Lord, and were never joined to idols. Though "they wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, they received a good report through faith."

Henri saw that I was silent, and that there were tears in my eyes. "Do not take it to heart, little one," he said.

"O Henri! have you lost your reason?" I cried. "The Lady Marguerite would never think of *you*, except to laugh at your folly."

He answered calmly that this was quite true. He could never *live* for her surely; yet he should be quite content if he might only die for her—which after all might well come to pass.



Could the blindest folly go than that?

"It makes little difference," he added, "what fair picture a man carries in his breast, so it always remains a picture. And a man may be sworn knight to any noble maiden, if all he asks is to break a lance in her service."

"That is idolatry!" I answered quickly; "it is like the worship which the Papists give their saints. O my dear, I am sure it is!"

Henri answered with a sigh and half inaudibly some words which were a riddle to me. He would not repeat them, but I think he meant to say that he wished it were. Wished that he were a worshipper of saints! how terrible! If so, it was a thoughtless speech which had no place in his heart. In a moment he said very quietly, "I worship none but God, Manon, nor ever shall."

But it is an easy thing to be self-deceived, and the snares by which the adversary beguiles men's souls are so many.

At that very moment a neighbour brought us news which fired Henri's heart with such indignation that I am afraid my words will not abide in his memory. M. Besenval, that Swiss aristocrat who is set over patriot troops, had been shutting certain of the Gardes Françaises in the Abbaye, for no reason except that, being men themselves, they felt for the miseries of other men who had starving wives and children. When M. Besenval wished them to shoot down the people who cried for bread, they refused to obey. Merciful God! was that a crime? It may be that some of their own little children were crying for bread, since soldiers' pay, like much besides, had gone for palace entertainments and queen's diamonds.

But all true hearts are not stilled and all courage is not crushed by tyranny. The brave people of Paris, rising in righteous indignation, did themselves set M. Besenval's prisoners free, and carried them off in triumph.

While we listened to these things, Annette vowed with tears that she wished she had been a man to help to carry them their



liberty. But Henri turned upon her coldly, and said that such words were not fitting in a woman.

Lucile, who is always filled with the spirit of peace, touched Henri's hand.

"Annette is not unwomanly," she argued gently. "It is one mark of a true woman, my dear, that her heart beats with the afflicted."

We reached Paris by dinner-time, having brought with us a basket of bread, since Lucile is not over well provided with the good things of this life. Besides, the bread which they are standing in line to purchase in Paris now is adulterated with a substance like plaster-of-Paris or worse, and is really no bread at all. I ate a little of it that Saturday, because I wished that Lucile, who is looking wan and pale, should have ours, which is better. But all through the Sabbath I felt ill, with a pain which made me cry like a baby, and a great burning in my throat; and I would not touch another morsel of it. Lucile takes these things lightly. She says that one gets used to such bread after much eating, and that in small portions it is said to be an excellent medicine. That may be true, but being timid of pain, I had rather not purchase benefits at so severe a price.

I was too ill to think of going to service, which at first made me sorrowful and heavy-hearted. But I remembered that God chooses his own way for us to serve him, and that, since it was a cross for me to abide at home, he would make my prayers upon my bed as acceptable as though I "had gone with the multitude."

Annette was minded to remain at home with me; but to this I would not consent, and having heard the door close after her, I began to offer up prayer for the peace and quietness of the land; also for the king, that God would give him a humble heart. When I came to his wife, truly I had much debate with myself as to the best method of praying for such a woman. Should one ask that her heart might be softened by the miseries



of the people? or might it not be well to pray, like David, that God would confound her wicked inventions? Yet all the time I was conscious of a voice, beyond or above my reasoning, which bade me remember in what fashion our blessed Lord had prayed for those who nailed him to the cross. Was ever greater sin than the murder of God's dear Anointed? And then it came suddenly to my mind that if any sinner in all the land had need of earnest constant prayer, it was the queen. Being so proud and hardened, she will scarcely pray for herself; and being a Papist, what would avail in any case such prayers as she might make? The more a woman stands in need of prayer, the more ready should a Christian be to pray for her. But with the pain in my body and throat bearing witness against her majesty, I could hardly believe that I was a Christian at all.

I had so far conquered myself that I had begun to raise my voice for her that God would turn her heart, when the door opened softly and Annette appeared.

"I knew you would be at prayer," she said, with laughing eyes; "and you may keep on with your praying while I look after your stomach."

"Annette," I began to admonish her, "you were wrong to stay behind from the service of God's house." But I felt so glad of her presence that I could not chide her more severely. Annette's mother was a Papist, and Annette takes little interest in serious things.

"Wrong! oh yes," she cried gaily; "you would have one say prayers for ever. There is too much abroad which I must needs look after first. I have been up to the roof, and the whole city is in a tumult. See, *pauvrette*, if thou canst lift thy head—there are great placards posted all about. I ran across the street to spy out what was on them."

"Oh! what was it, Annette?" I cried, springing up and flying to the low window; for our chamber was in the *entre-sol* overlooking the garden.

"A king's proclamation," she answered tartly, "and, like all



the king's doings, without wit or reason. Why should the people 'be quiet and stay indoors'? Are they not always quiet?"

I would not gainsay Annette, having no wish to stir up her anger, or I might have reminded her that we could neither of us sleep during the night for the hootings and the uproar all about us. I had noted the day before that all the city seemed to be in the street. Every store where pamphlets were sold was like the bakers' shops—so filled with purchasers that they pressed and jostled each other. One would think the good citizens as eager to feed their minds as they are to feed their bodies. Men were mounted at nearly every corner talking loudly to the gaping crowds. We could not well understand their words, but we could always discern that they were spoken against aristocrats.

Yet no aristocrat takes the pains to reply. They do not think it worth their while perhaps. There may yet come a day when it will seem wisdom to have done many things which now seem foolishness.

Annette is wrong—the people are *not* quiet.

"Do you know, Manon," she cried, shaking away the black hair which had fallen about her forehead, "I long to be in the midst of it?"

"There may be danger abroad," I suggested fearfully.

"Danger!" she cried with a bitter laugh; "there is like to be danger ere long, but not to you or me. I saw a great gathering of soldiers in the distance, with red coats among them. It seems to me that Messieurs les Suisses had better beware how they fire upon people who feed on plaster-of-Paris."

Annette's eyes flashed, and she clenched her small hands defiantly. "You need not fear to let me go," she added with much scorn: "the royal proclamation assures us that there is nothing to fear."

As she spoke some one ran through the garden, crying in a loud voice; but his words we could not hear for the shouting of



the people, until they were repeated by a murmur of voices from under our window. Necker had been dismissed—Necker, the people's friend!

After that, I could not doubt that the queen and M. d'Artois had really been seeking to undermine the *Salle des Menus* to blow up the National Assembly. M. Necker had brought this evil plot to light, and suffered for his faithfulness.

We stood and looked in each other's eyes. Annette was flushed and angry, and I—I believe I was crying.

"The king seemed to mean so well," I sobbed.

"The king is tied to apron-strings," said Annette, with a bitter laugh. "Ah! see," she cried, thrusting her head from the window, "there is M. Desmoulins, Manon."

M. Desmoulins used to be a friend of Henri's years ago. But he was angry that Henri would not study law with him: Henri was throwing over such splendid chances, he said, for a mere sentiment of duty. Since then Henri and he have grown apart; but Camille has no lack of friends, since like M. Marat he is sworn friend of the people.

There were small tables set out in front of the *Café de Foi*, and some folk who were not sitting in church—where all good Christians should have been—were lounging about these little tables, sipping cheap wine and talking over the news. M. Desmoulins rushed in among them with a pistol in each hand, and springing upon one of these tables began to talk to the crowd. In other days I had sometimes thought him vain and insincere. I had said to Henri that he spoke for the sake of hearing people praise him. Now every word came directly from his heart.

He called upon the people to save themselves from such cowardly oppression. His cry, "To arms! to arms!" was echoed straight back to him from hundreds of voices. It seemed like one great voice of thunder rising from the earth beneath us. The crowd, grown madmen like himself, surged wildly round him; and when, to give them a rallying sign, he broke branches



from the trees above his head, and threw them to the people, all the people sprang forth to seize them. Happy the man who captured but a leaf !

I could feel Annette trembling against my side, but not with fear. She too was growing mad. She tore a broad green ribbon from her belt, and threw it out of the window with an eager cry. Hundreds of hands were stretched for it before it fell, and the crowd tore it in pieces among them as wild beasts tear their prey. Short work such frenzied folk will make of trifles. They waved their hats and branches, and fell to cheering Annette, who looked out at them with flashing eyes and her face aglow with a beautiful crimson. It was no marvel that all eyes should gaze upon her.

M. Desmoulins descended from the table, while all who could reach him hung about his steps, wept over him, and showered blessings upon his head ; after which the whole throng poured away like heroes eager to be doing, and Annette with them. All this was on the blessed Sabbath—the day of goodwill and peace.

So, being exhausted for the lack of wholesome food, I went back to my bed. And lacking earthly sustenance, I turned myself again to heavenly food. Indeed I was so overwrought by sorrow and anxiety that I found in me a desire even to pray for the queen. And with that desire came upon me a quietness in the midst of turmoil. God blessed Job when he prayed for his *friends* : how much more will he bless us when we pray for our enemies ? I took to my heart the truth that God is more mindful of me than of his sparrows—quite as mindful of me as of the king and the courtiers. It is better to have one's portion yonder than to be “clothed in purple and fine linen” here.

“When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?”

While I was still at prayer, Annette returned with Lucile. The little Félice was crying for food, and my sister was pale and sorrowful ; she said she feared that they would come to shedding of blood.



"And what if they do?" said Annette; "there is bad blood enough that needs spilling."

My sister looked at Annette with great reproachful eyes which were full of heavenly wisdom.

"God forgive you, Annette," she said, "and hold your hands, lest he should count that blood which you call evil the blood of his faithful martyrs."

Annette shrugged her shoulders.

"I call no names," she said; "the people must judge—the people who starve."

Lucile was about to feed the child, but she turned at this and said gently,—

"The good pasteur Leroy told us to-day that this is a time of chastening for sin. He says that the people, each apart, must suffer for the sins of the nation."

"Ah! that is brave justice!" cried Annette,— "that the innocent people should expiate the sins of those wretched kings, who, as my uncle says, have poisoned the very air with the scent of their crimes. The pasteur Leroy preaches a marvellous doctrine!"

"Lucile," I said gently, "such suffering as that—the innocent for the guilty—was only for the blessed Lord, the one sinless Sufferer."

"And for his children," said Lucile meekly, "who should follow in his footsteps."

Annette shrugged her shoulders again. She loves Lucile, yet they are always out of harmony.

"It is well that the people have no mind to be sacrificed," she said. "They have been to the Hôtel de Ville for arms; but there are no arms for the having. Men are trying to calm them by placid words. *Words* are very well in their place, but one cannot feed upon them; for there are more eloquent words in the air than any which the king's servants can proclaim."

While we were at supper that evening my father suddenly appeared. Like an old war-horse, he had scented the battle in



the very air. He was full of wrath at the king, who had been calling out troops to suppress the people. "That is a fine father who can set hirelings upon his children," said he, clenching his fist and dropping it heavily upon the table, so that the dishes clattered and frightened the little one.

For myself, I wished right heartily that night that we had not come to Paris at all, for I was nearly beside myself with Annette's vehemence and Lucile's sorrowful eyes. There never was such a tumult before, I am sure, and very likely there never will be such another. God knows there scarcely could be greater cause. I never had supposed I was a coward, but all my courage seemed to leave me on that night. The very sound of a gun set me trembling, and the outcries of the people filled me with a terror which I cannot well describe. The blood seemed to course back upon my heart and stifle me; and this was all the stranger because I knew I had no cause for fear. These were only suffering people, who cried out in their misery—French people, whom I love with all my heart. Their griefs and troubles are my own.

Annette was not afraid. I think she hardly closed her eyes in sleep that night; but she was not afraid. Many times I wakened and looked about me, but she was always either going to or coming from the window. Finally, seeing that I was wide awake, she came and lay down beside me, and began to ask me questions—questions which had nothing to do with the trouble on my mind. First: What had I been saying to Henri on Saturday morning? and as she asked me, she put her arm coaxingly about me, and laid her cheek to mine. I wished only to tell the truth, though I felt reluctant to give her pain; but at length I spoke some faltering words about my having reproached him for being so much from home.

"And what reason did he give?" she asked quickly, seizing my hands in both of hers. I paused a moment, not liking to tell her of Henri's curious fancy, which surely was a thing to be deplored. And before I could find words to speak, Annette



demanded shortly: "Had it aught to do with that day of my lady's visit, Manon?"

"Henri was hurt at such lack of hospitality," I answered faintly.

May God forgive me, for I spoke but half the truth.

"What does he know of that little aristocrat?" she asked impatiently. "What is she to him, that he should be angry over that?"

And as I made no answer she persisted still, as though she were testing me:—

"Doubtless he had never seen her in his life until that day?"

"I am sure he had seen her before, Annette," I answered; "but even if he had not, Henri can never abide discourtesy."

She waited for one moment, and then continued softly,—

"Manon, there was a time when I thought that he cared for me; did *you*?"

"I should have been right heartily glad, Annette," I answered then.

"I believe it is the wiles of my lady," she said, a little huskily; "there is witchcraft about her."

"No, Annette; it must be the Lord's doing," I answered. "Love may not be bidden either here or there."

"Oh! that is brave talking," cried Annette impatiently; "but what does God care either for me or my loving?"

"I suppose you are of more worth than the sparrows," I said, "and he cares for them."

Annette laughed bitterly. "Then of course he cares for my lady also," she said. "I do not wish to share my good things with aristocrats. If I loved her as my own soul, she should not stand in my way."

"Annette," I said, "be calm and think a moment. You are beside yourself to fancy that this lady of yours would give a second thought to any man who was so low as to be a lover of yours, be it Henri or another."

"You said that love cannot be bidden either here or there,"



she retorted. But while she spoke some sound from without drew her again to the window; and being drowsy, I dropped off into a heavy sleep. And so at last the wearisome night was ended. And in the morning Annette had forgotten or had laid away her sorrows. She was so full of excitement that she sang snatches of song to herself while she arranged her hair; and she was careful to tie a green ribbon at her neck, that no one might mistrust the colour of her heart.

As to that indeed, she might well have spared herself the pains. For green is the colour of the Comte d'Artois, and, as we soon discovered, is sacred to him and to his followers. Even the colour in which God clothes the grass and the lily-leaves is not free to all his children. Green would be quite useless to M. d'Artois if the unclean touch of the *canaille* were laid upon it. It is great pity that monsieur could not hold some patent by which all green growing things should be put beyond the sight of common folk—trees and grass, and deep-sea water, and that delicate emerald of the sky at sunset times.

I trust there is no unkindness in my heart toward M. d'Artois more than toward another of his class. I wonder, has one license to hate a *class*, if one does not hate one member by himself?

Such a crowd streamed past the house through all the early morning, that it took short time to discover what colours held the place of that green of M. d'Artois. And presently my sister's little shop was beset by customers, while Annette and I set busily to work, making breast-knots of red and white and blue. As fast as we made the tri-coloured cockades they were seized and paid for by the eager crowd. I am not sure that any one knew what he intended to do, or even the meaning of the colours. But each knew that he was hungry, and all seemed to have a fancy that in order to be fed one must have arms.

My sister had begun to protest when first we took our needles. She would not sanction anything that was contrary to law or against the king. But some one assured her, how-



ever truly, that there was no thought of rebellion; the people were gathered to plead with the king for bread, and they wanted a rallying sign. Whereat Mère Gensonné, who knew the surest way of quieting Lucile, carried her away to see a poor little child who was dying. For all the neighbours understand my sister's tender conscience; and there seemed to be a compact among them to help her even against her will, lest she should lose the profits of the morning. Whether there were really a sick child in neighbour Gensonné's mind I cannot say—doubtless there are sick children at every corner now—but she could not have found a surer way to entice my sister, who hastened for her case of herbs and left us to our labours.

I had often thought that the press was great on gala days in Versailles, but I had never dreamed of such a crowd as this. It gave one a faint idea of how many people must go to make the world—*this* world alone—and how very great and wise our God must be to keep them all in mind. The bells were ringing in all the churches, and the air was full of a low muttering like far-off thunder. Men ran wildly through the streets, calling out to the people to follow them; though there was small need for calling, since every one was minded to follow some one else. Even Annette, when there was no further call for ribbons, was eager to join the crowd. And when I begged her with tears to stay, she stood at the shop door, crying to every one who passed for news.

By the time Lucile returned the crowd had begun to arm themselves with shovels and pokers and brooms. "St. Antoine is all abroad," said my sister, looking from the window while she soothed the little one to sleep. She spoke very calmly, and then she sighed and turned away her head. Lucile has grown quite used to St. Antoine.

"They are finding arms!" cried Annette eagerly. "There go some muskets and old lances, and there are pikes in the distance. That red-haired fellow yonder told me that the smiths are all busy for their lives at forging pikes. And they



have found grain, oh ! plenty of grain, in the Maison de St. Lazare. Believe me, there is food enough, if one knew where to find it. Come, Manon, let us go.”

“But there may be shooting,” I answered, drawing back ; “and Lucile would be alone. Wait until my father returns, and go with him.” And Annette waited unwillingly enough ; for the sky in the distance was red with the flame of burning houses, and the noise of that great multitude filled the air far on into the night. Did any one rest, I wonder, with the incessant beating of drums and clangour of bells, and the surging of those living billows all about them ?

My father returned very late, and threw himself upon the floor in Lucile’s small shop. All good citizens had been ordered to their districts to enrol, he said. To keep the mob in check, folk said it was ; but more likely, added my father, with a shrug of the shoulders, “to help them along a little.”

We did not know until afterwards that Henri was among the first to enrol himself that night. If I had known, I should have understood better what the real meaning of the enrolment was. It could not have meant to *Henri* giving aid to murder and wrong.

Annette slept a little, being wearied ; but with the first light of morning I heard her moving softly about the room, arraying herself in her dainty bonnet, on which the tri-coloured cockade was perched aloft.

I started out of bed with a protest on my lips.

“I have been watching from the window,” she said. “Every woman in Paris is abroad. I will not stay another moment within.”

“Annette,” I said, sobbing and catching her hand, “they are not women like you and me, with food and homes. They are rough and starving women, who are used to living in the streets.”

She turned upon me with a strange fierceness in her manner, and wrenched her hand away.

“I thought you were a *Christian*,” she said, “and professed to love all the world because Christ loved them. But *you* are



afraid of publicans and sinners. You are content that the crowd should suffer, if *you* are not quite starving. I thought you despised aristocrats: *you* are an aristocrat if you hold yourself better than the people because you have a home, and scorn the wretched women who have none."

In good sooth I had never before known such an Annette as this. Anger and indignation had transformed her into a sort of avenging angel. The tears rolled down my cheeks while I tried to plead my cause with her.

"You don't understand me," I said. "I would do anything to give food and help to the poor suffering city. But what can *I* do among thousands?"

"Ay, what indeed?" she asked in a tone of scorn; "*nothing*, surely, if you are going to weep and faint like an aristocrat. There are tender and delicate women abroad, for I myself have seen them—women who have lovers and husbands. You are no choicer than another, Manon Beaupré, and women are sometimes stronger than the strongest."

"Oh," I cried, grieved to the heart, "that you should think me so evil as to despise any one for being homeless, when my Master had not where to lay his head."

Annette laughed bitterly.

"Words cost nothing," she said; "prove that your heart is right by putting yourself on the side of the oppressed, as your Master did."

And when she argued thus what could I do? Annette has a persuasive tongue, and a woman's judgment is often led astray by just such words as hers. Since she wished me to prove my love for the Lord by going, it really seemed to me that the Lord himself must call me. A great fear seized me, and a strong quaking of the heart; but I told Annette I would go.

When I had dressed myself and crept softly down the stairs she was standing in the doorway gazing up the street.

The early morning air was cool and sweet, as if God's peace were waiting to fall upon the world. There was something in



its freshness even then which made one think of grass with dew upon it, of daisies, and the twitter of little birds which are just awake. The memory sickened me with longing in the midst of such a crowd. There were great strong men in coarse flannel shirts, which fell open at the front and showed brawny chests strengthened by much toil—men with iron hands. There were women rougher than the men, and also gentler women with children in their arms. Little children also pushed their weak way along on foot who had better have been at home. And besides all these, as Annette had said, there were brave-looking men, and gentlewomen, too, fired with the spirit of patriotism. At that moment Lucile appeared and began to entreat Annette, if she would really go, to have some coffee and a bit of breakfast first. And when I heard that Félice had been ill all the night, and saw Lucile looking pale and worn, I was forced to stop and coax the little one to sleep, even though Annette should chafe at the delay.

By the time we were fairly off only a few stragglers were passing; but when we had passed the Church of St. Eustache, and had almost reached the Rue St. Denis, walking swiftly, we heard many voices close upon us, and the words, borne toward us by the wind, seemed to shape themselves for our guidance—"À la Bastille! à la Bastille!"

My heart gave a great throb of joy at this. I did not even think of the distance, which was great, and my own tired feet. What could the good people of Paris want with the Bastille but to set the prisoners free? And if to do this deed they had to tear those terrible walls asunder, would not the act still be one at which the angels of God would rejoice?

We had many weary steps to take before we saw, rising dimly in the distance, those great frowning towers thrown black against the sky—towers on towers rising boldly up, as if to bid defiance to the people; or rather perhaps, as I have often thought, lifting up great black arms in dumb appeal to God against the tyranny of kings. For even in the reign of



our own King Louis every year the shadows have seemed to deepen for those unhappy prisoners—more gratings and bars at the windows, and heavier bolts at the doors, with always less and less of air and sunlight. Even I can remember the time when one could see them daily at their little walk in the courtyard or on the roof: of late no eye but the eye of their jailer and that of their God ever lights on one of them. But God's eye is very watchful, and notes the king as well as the prisoner.

"Let us follow!" cried Annette, catching my arm and hurrying me down the street. I had no time to breathe, for like a blast of wind she whirled me after her. The crowd grew closer and closer about us until, at the turning of the Rue Cloche Perche where it joins the Rue St. Antoine, we seemed suddenly to find ourselves in the very heart of it. All the world shouted, "À la Bastille!" Strong men, and women clothed in rags, looked on us with approval. Annette was shouting like the rest, and her eyes were flashing with delight. One red-faced matron, who had both a broom and a pair of tongs, gave the tongs to Annette. To my wonder she received them with eager thanks, and waving them above her head cried in a joyous voice, "Any weapon is glorified in the service of one's country!" It was a day of strange revelations. I had never known Annette before. The men shouted her praises in hoarse tones, and the women who were nearest to her threw their arms about her and embraced her.

The crowd had now become so dense that as far as one could see there were only waving pikes, and a vision of eager, lifted faces, all striving vainly to see over the heads around them—moving blindly, as *we* did, where the common movement tended. It was like a great sea, with faces and arms stretched up struggling against the waves. For myself I was borne off my feet, and had that feeling of great dread which one has when under water, as though there were no rescue or escape. The human creatures, like the waves of the ocean, spread far on every side and overwhelmed us. I forgot my



gladness ; I shuddered at the terrible oaths and the cries for blood which I heard on every side, and even from women's lips. Since I had no control over my own deeds, being part of this great flood-tide, I could not go back if I would. A dreadful thought flashed upon me that any deadly deed these people might commit, I being one of them, might be accounted for my own. The dread that God might so look upon it drove me to sudden penitence. But penitence seems as unavailing when one cannot turn from sin as though death had set its barriers. As I saw Annette swept from me by the crowd which was forced between us, I felt as though I were truly engulfed and my last plank slipping from me.

It was just at that moment that some one spoke my name, and turning in alarm I saw M. Foucher close beside me, his hat off, and his black hair lying in damp, disordered locks about his face. "Ah, Mademoiselle Manon," he shouted fiercely, "the nation is making history ; *we* are making history—you and I. Before the might of the nation tyranny will be crushed in its stronghold."

I had a fancy, even in that dreadful moment, that M. Foucher was thinking over some grand speech for the next morning's journal ; but before I could answer him he also was borne from me, as a chip of wood is borne upon the waves. On and on we went ; and now the crowd swayed this way and now that, but always with the same great purpose held in view. My feet were very tired ; and if I had not striven hard for courage, I should have quailed at the first discharge from the Bastille cannon. But strength of will and strong excitement nerved my heart. I was jostled on every side. A man, not twenty feet before me, fell dead in my sight. The people shrieked for vengeance on those who were murdering their brothers, and I did not blame them. Is it not hard to be killed when one is striving to set prisoners free ?

I had no power to reason then. Now, after calmer thinking, I am not sure whether the taking of that great prison-



house was a deed acceptable with God. He is so much more compassionate than we, that he must have been more angry than we could be at the crimes committed there. But the doing of further evil does not wipe out the stain of that which is wrought already. "When he maketh inquisition for blood," will he remember, I wonder, the blood of that old sinner M. de Launay and the Swiss soldiers who fell, as well as the other blood with which the Bastille has been stained for centuries? Does God *always* want to "avenge his own elect" himself? And was he angry with me that my heart went with the people in their anger and triumphed in their victory?

I was hardly conscious of what passed before my eyes, for the sight of blood made me sick and dizzy, and the firing of the cannon filled the air with smoke. At one time a report ran wildly through the crowd that M. de Launay was about to blow up the powder-magazine, and I closed my eyes quickly with the thought that I should be blown straight before God's judgment-seat. Then followed such a great tumult that I found myself pushed further away from the accursed place, and from the denser portion of the crowd, and after I cannot tell how long some one said to me, "Open thine eyes, foolish one; the Bastille surrenders." And when I had obeyed I saw the white flag flying from the ramparts, and the people rushing over the drawbridge in a living flood.

And now, may God forgive me that I had exulted even for a moment in my heart over this deed of vengeance! For as I turned, after going a few yards, to see the Tricolor wave above the old Bastille, I saw a man carrying a human head aloft in the air—a human head upon a pike! I never shall forget the ghastly sight, for it haunts me every hour. It seemed for the moment to brand that deed of the people with a mark more lurid than Cain's.

I sat right there on a door-step, in the midst of that shouting multitude, and cried as though my heart were breaking, and no one asked me why.



X.

*SUMMER DAYS.*

THOSE hot July days after the great Bastille had fallen were full of mutterings. One might have called it "earthquake weather," for the moral atmosphere was lowering, mysterious. Thus far the rising of the people has wise defenders among those who look back dispassionately and render impartial judgments. It was more than a "revolt," as the king should presently see, and it had the sorest provocation. But the wrath of a mob, after the first acts of unlawful violence, is like the wrath of a young tiger that has tasted blood and is still unsated. In such seasons those *wise* men who are objects of popular hatred will look well to their safety. So there was fitting from the palace as well as arming in the city.

If Manon could calmly review that terrible day in Paris, finding little to regret beyond a ghastly head upon a pike, and praying God to wash away the blood-stains, even Marguerite was not so grieved but that she found heart to be merry. There was to her something mirth-provoking in the speed with which the friends of the court packed up their possessions at the advice of the king, forgetting the devotion and the vows of halcyon days. Marguerite laid no claims to stoutness of heart, yet she would have felt her name disgraced by such cowardly flight, such disloyal friendship. The Hegira of the nobles was a scandal in her eyes, and when assured that the queen had conjured her friends, by their love for



herself, to put themselves in safety, she smiled and raised her shoulders a little as she answered, "Why is *their* safety more to be desired than her majesty's?" But she added to herself when no one heard her, "If I were the king, I should see to it that all my subjects were safe wherever they might be," which were brave words for an uncrowned maiden to speak.

But this maiden had some very pertinent thoughts in relation to public events which she did not keep to herself, though she spoke them softly, as a woman should, and with a demure little smile. Here were these naughty people of Paris crying for M. Necker—breaking down their terrible dark closet because they may not have him; and, instead of chastising them, one sends speedily for M. Necker to soothe their cries. "It is quite the same," she would add, "as though I should say to a child who screams for *bonbons*, 'Only be quiet, my love, and you shall have all the *bonbons* you desire.'" She wished the Great Louis might only be there for a day. But since that might not be, she stooped to the occasion, and aided Madame de Polignac in her hasty packing with a quiet grace. "Indeed," thought she, "when all is said, her majesty is none the poorer for the loss of such timid partisans." Marguerite had a dim recollection of a story she had heard in other days concerning a certain army about to fight a battle. It was not a great host, and yet, even so, there were too many—she had forgotten why—perhaps all were not steadfast-hearted. She remembered this, however, that every man who was feeble or afraid was bidden to seek his home, and that those who remained were stronger for the loss, or quite as strong. It would be so, perhaps, with the cause of the king.

She said as much as this to M. de Nesle one day, and he smiled somewhat gravely before he answered. As yet Marguerite had given him no cause for smiling joyously; but he was very patient. There were many old traditions which still clung to him. Remembering the days when every true knight



must prove his sword and gain his spurs before he won his lady, it seemed not unreasonable to him that even in such prosaic days as these some test should be required. It was unlikely that he should perform any notable feat of arms for his lady's sake; but there are battle-fields of many different kinds, and he was willing to be proven.

"I do not think that one is ever the better for the loss of friends," he answered.

"Ah! but, monsieur," said Marguerite, "should you call one a true friend who left you in your sorrow?"

"It is not a pleasant thing to have a price set upon your head," he answered. "Brave men may quail at that, and surely women should."

"That depends upon the woman," she answered softly, but with fire in her eyes. "It depends also upon the blood which runs in one's veins. Do you think that if a price was set upon your head, monsieur, you would desert your king?"

He looked up at her quickly with a smile in his eyes. Was this a test then? Mademoiselle did not think him very brave perhaps; she had fears that he, too, might fail in case of trial. Well, then, let the trial prove. Perhaps he might. Men with as brave a name as his had oftentimes proved cowards. He had never boasted of exploits, or had many to boast of. He would win no woman by a fair display of words or prophecies. So he answered simply,—

"I lay no claim to be more faithful than the king's faithful friends who have just fled. I should always feel it my duty to obey his majesty, and obedience is sometimes the harder service."

She laughed a little scornfully. "Then, monsieur, there is no need to give you my word," she said, "since *by the king's command* you may be the next to flee."

But looking up and seeing his face full of tender reproach, the colour stole softly into her face, and she repented of her words.

That ball in the Orangerie had, in the words of Scripture,



given much "occasion" to the "enemy to speak reproachfully." It seemed hard that, while the people were "ravening like young lions" for bread, the court should have feasted and danced away the moonlit hours. Such contrasts there are in all human life. But there were other contrasts which were just as real and less apparent. While the *hearts* of the people were black with rage and hate, the heart of the king, at least, was devising measures of peace. For after all is said, the king's conscience was his chief counsellor. If he listened to another and asserted for to-day his royal power, it was to change ingloriously to-morrow. This was his wisdom and his folly—perpetually to yield. Not a hero surely, but of the stuff that martyrs are made of.

So Necker, the self-seeker, was recalled; the foreign troops were banished; every thorn which might hurt the flesh of the good people of Paris was removed. The king was their father; and when his majesty told the Assembly of all the gracious acts which he had it in his mind to do, Versailles and Paris thronged about him, hailed him with *vivats*, and made the air ring with their rejoicing.

"But if I were the king," said Marguerite softly to Madame Fleurance and her friend Gabrielle, as they watched the rejoicing from an upper window—"if I were the king, I should not so soon forget the head of poor M. de Launay. Blessed Sainte Marie! it makes one's blood curdle to think of it."

"Your blood is not in good order, my dear," said madame, smiling blandly; "you must take a cordial for it."

Marguerite turned quickly toward this lady with a vague sense of suspicion. Yet, after all, who was more assiduous, more ready for every kind office, than madame? Who was more indignant than she at the flight of M. d'Artois and the Polignacs? She could scarcely restrain her outraged feelings even in presence of the queen. "Perhaps it is true," said Marguerite to herself; "I may have some disorder of the blood, since I am so quick to mistrust my friends."



One evening Marguerite, who had grown weary over her tapestry frame, slipped down into the gardens for a breath of fresher air. As she passed through a certain dim corridor she heard the low sound of voices, and in a moment came directly upon Madame Fleurange in earnest conversation with a stranger. The man was a rough-looking fellow, with a slouched hat pulled over his eyes; and the young girl, glancing straight into his face, fancied that he was the same whom she had noticed on the day of the procession.

But madame remarked with unchanged countenance, "This poor man was telling me his troubles, *petite*. It is the old story—no work, no bread! If one could have but a royal purse to feed the starving poor!—My good fellow, we all of us, even the queen herself, loathe the dainties we are forced to eat while others starve."

The man gave a short laugh, and pulled his hat further over his face, while Marguerite passed out into the garden. The light was fading, but the sunset glow still flooded the west, and Versailles was so well guarded that she had no cause for fear. Yet she hesitated at the entrance of a shaded alley, and when a man's voice spoke her name she trembled with alarm.

"O M. d'Arblay, is it you?" she exclaimed, with a gentle sigh of relief. "I will confess to you that I am always now in dread of those terrible people of Paris."

He laughed merrily. "Why should you fear the people, mademoiselle? They have kind hearts."

"Why, yes," she answered scornfully. "M. de Launay proved their kindness; and they were gentle as tigers to those unhappy Swiss. Do you think it kind to carry heads upon pikes, M. d'Arblay?"

"There always will be vagabonds in every crowd, dear lady," he answered gently, "who cannot be restrained. I do not sanction the affair, believe me—it was wretchedly controlled; but on the whole the people behaved well for a starving multi-



tude. As to De Launay, he had in mind to do much worse, if he had not been hindered—with his hand on the powder-magazine and murder in his heart. The people are most happy now since the king has shown them favour."

"The king is far too gracious, M. d'Arblay—more gracious, I think, than you would have been on a like occasion."

"Have *you* ever found me ungracious?" he asked; but this remark, being personal, Marguerite saw fit to ignore.

At this moment, as they turned toward the palace, the man who had been speaking with madame passed them by at a slouching gait, his hat still drawn over his forehead. Marguerite, with a little start as of fear, touched the arm of her companion. "That man," she said softly, "who is he?"

D'Arblay turned and gazed for a moment after him. "I know the figure of the man," he said, "but I forget the name. I have seen him hanging about the Assembly. He has written some rabid pamphlets, I think. Why do you ask?"

"I was curious," she answered quietly; "I am seeking knowledge. But, monsieur, I see no cause at least why *you* should hang about the Assembly, not being a delegate, and having duties at court."

She looked directly in his face with steady, questioning eyes, and M. d'Arblay frowned slightly in answering. Yet, if he had one feeling stronger than another, it was the desire to stand clear before the judgment-bar of this imperative little lady.

"There may be no good reason for many things that I do, madame," he replied. "I like, with other men, to know what the world is doing, and to have an opportunity to draw my own conclusions. One likes to hear all sides of a question before judging."

"Pardon me," she said: "since you are a courtier I can see no reason why you should judge at all. At such times we should each stand by our colours—that is all. When one begins to question and weigh, that is the first step toward desertion." Her words were certainly severe, but the voice



with which she uttered them was so musical and soft that no man could have found it in his heart to be angry.

"To me, who am not heart-whole," he answered, "it seems fittest that a man's colours should be always those of his dearest lady, as in the order of chivalry. In such a case he will certainly guard them free from stain."

"I cannot speak for your dearest lady," she said coldly; adding with a little laugh, "As for myself, the man who guards my colours guards the king's; there is no difference."

All of which M. d'Arblay received with what grace he might.

Manon Beaupré had returned from Paris with a feeling of great relief. It seemed to her, even for a good patriot, a very unstable place in which to live. It might be a praiseworthy act to overthrow such dungeons as the old Bastille; but when it came to breaking one's *foi d'officier*, and allowing deeds of murder, the matter had become one for earnest prayer. But though very patiently she set herself to pray over it, there were hindrances to Manon's prayers in those days. "When thou standest praying, forgive if thou hast aught against any," is the command; and her spirit of forgiveness had not been strengthened by her morning spent in rambling over the ruins of the old Bastille.

To touch with her hand the damp dungeon walls where men had been chained like ravenous beasts, to look upon the *oubliettes* where they had lain forgotten, to see deeds of darkness revealed in God's clear sunlight, filled Manon with dismay. While she pondered these things she became half inclined to forgive the horrors of Tuesday for the sake of those black deeds, long over, and the doers of which were already passed into the presence of the Judge.

"Can any fate be too hard," she said to herself, "for those who have planned such deeds, and hidden them away, and showed no mercy?"

Annette broke in upon her musing. "That black-haired



man who talked with me on Tuesday," she said, "told me many things about this place—how prisoners have been roasted over slow fires, and thrown into pits for the rats to devour them. Some have been built alive into the walls, with one stone left out through which they could have air and food, until they died."

"I never heard of such things," said Manon with a shudder, "and I do not believe them, Annette. All that we know is bad enough; and I did not like the looks of that black-haired man."

Annette laughed. "We are all brothers and sisters now," she said; "one must not mind appearances."

Manon shook her head; her patriotism had not reached so far. She had questions to solve in those days which sorely bewildered her, and before leaving Paris she went to pour her troubles into the ear of the good old pasteur Leroy. He had been her guide for many years, and she knew of no earthly counsellor in whom she had such blind, unswerving faith. In other days he had seen persecution for the sake of Christ, and having suffered himself, he had a tender heart for the wrongs of others. Manon had to traverse many narrow ways and crooked turnings, for the chapel stood in a quiet corner of the city, where few passers-by disturbed the stillness. The time had been, not so very long before, when its presence even there was unlawful.

No one thought of it now—it was too small to be worth a mention; and the ivy and moss had grown so thickly over the walls that it seemed a curious bit of nature's handiwork.

The chamber adjoining the chapel into which the old pastor received Manon and Félice was low-ceiled, and lighted with small, dim windows. The floor was bare, and a rough pine table and narrow bench were all its furnishing. There had been also a wooden arm-chair for the pastor of rude ordinary make, but time had dealt so sadly with it that it had fallen apart, and the remnants were laid together in a corner.

On the table stood a deal box with a padlock, for holding papers, also an old leather-bound Bible, and a bottle of ink.



A very rude place certainly was this prophet's chamber. Yet to Manon it always seemed the very gate of heaven. She knew well that other treasures besides the costly things of earth were considered there. When the sun shone through the small and dusty panes aslant the roughness of the floor, it seemed to her as though an angel might be treading in the gleam of it. She always thought with bated breath of John at Patmos, and of the prison where Paul and Silas sung hymns together, and the angel came in the midst of the singing. She had no doubt the angels were often listening in pasteur Leroy's little study.

And as she seated herself on the rough pine bench beside him she could not forbear the thought that she was unworthy to be in such godly company—the pastor and the angels!

"Dear father," she said, as he waited with that benignant smile for her to tell her trouble, "there are so many questions I cannot solve. Why does God let us all suffer so?"

"God does many things which we cannot fathom, my child," he said; "if we *could*, we would be wise like God. Take the little Félice," he added, smiling tenderly and lifting the child on his knee; "she wonders why you have come here this afternoon. She would be happier playing in the sunshine and watching the fountains. If you tried to tell her why you came here instead she would not understand. You have good reasons, but her mind is too small to grasp them. Sometimes she will think you unkind or foolish when you are trying to do her good. We are all children."

"I wonder, is God angry with us because of sin?" said Manon thoughtfully.

He shook his head slowly and smiled again.

"Do not trouble your small head with such mighty problems," he answered. "'Suppose ye,' said the Lord, 'that those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, were sinners above all men, because they suffered such things? I tell you nay.'"

Manon looked up eagerly, and her brow cleared.



"Yet, my child," the old man continued, "there is sin as well as suffering in the land. God purifies sin through suffering. Out of his refiner's fire it may be that he will yet 'purify to himself a peculiar people.'"

"But if the suffering, instead of purifying, leads to greater sin?" she asked. "If the people take vengeance on themselves for all their wrongs?"

"The people must learn patience," he answered gently; "they must settle their hearts to wait God's time. That is what I am always telling them. 'My friends,' I say, 'I am poor like you: I cannot give you food, only the bread of God; I cannot give you medicine, but the great Physician can. And one is never hungry in heaven.'"

"We are a patient people," he said again, "and each of us who is true gold will shine the brighter for the trial."

"But how is one to tell?" she cried despairingly; "and what can *one* perform among so many?"

"My dear," he answered gently, "once when the land of God lay desolate, and his hand lay heavy on the people, do you remember how they mourned and prayed—'the families of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the families of the house of Nathan apart, and *their* wives apart'? Ay," he continued, his eyes kindling beneath his bushy eyebrows, "you and I and many other units make the nation. Let us each look to our own hearts, lest the 'accursed thing be found with us' which keeps back the deliverance of Israel."

"I do—I do mourn," said Manon tearfully. "I am willing to be hungry if the deliverance might come."

She rose slowly and turned to go. The door into the little chapel stood ajar, and she could see the shadows resting heavily along the aisle. It seemed like a place forgotten—laid away from the thoughts of men. A musty odour reached her, as of flowers which have been laid away and died. One small window only was open, and the foliage without, pushing against it, waved softly at the opening. The benches were plain and stiff,



and the floor was bare, but to Manon it was none the less a holy place.

"Ah! I must close the window," said the old pastor; "the clouds are gathering, and we may have rain."

And Manon, turning wistfully away, said her farewells and departed.

She saw less than ever of her brother in those days. He was one of that body of National Guards who were set to protect the palace at Versailles. They had the Count d'Estaing for their commander, and stood in a certain sense between the courtiers and the people, though not to be relied upon, like the Régiment de Flandre or Royal Allemand.

When Henri Beaupré told his father of his enrolment, the old man had blessed him with tears. "I shall have to throw up work for the present," said Henri; "but the country stands first after God in every man's life, and it is better to starve than not to answer at her call."

The old man clasped both Henri's hands and pressed them to his heart. "It is better to be a patriot than a king!" he cried. "Remember also it is better to die than to fire on your brothers."

"May God preserve me from such dire necessity!" said Henri. "Yet, father, it was bitter shame, after pulling down that den of crime, which fell almost like the walls of Jericho, that the people should have tarnished their laurels with blood. *Some* one should have hindered."

"There is no revolution without victims," said the old man shortly. Henri made no answer, but his thoughts were busy. He had time for thinking in those days. Also he had opportunity for observing many things—the queen among them. It is a well-known truth in regard to this unhappy woman, that while she was hated so blindly all over the land, few ever came within the actual sound of her voice and the magic of her smile without being conquered by them. And Henri, seeing her even at a distance, felt this marvellous charm, and wondered



at it. At a distance also, and sometimes very near, he saw the Lady Marguerite. He was very well contented at Versailles.

Annette, who found many excuses for holding par lance with him, fancied that his heart had grown colder, or that he was too well assured of her love, and needed to be aroused by jealousy. She had lovers, one or two, who walked with her on moonlit nights in the gardens. All the world could see, and Henri also. But the obstinate fellow seemed only to amuse himself with her follies. Presently, in the still summer evenings, M. Douet began to appear on the scene, and upon this, before many days were passed, Henri began to show his disapproval. One morning when he met her suddenly in a corridor of the palace he spoke his mind. "That fellow who was with you last evening, *ma cousine*, is not a fit friend for you," he said.

Annette's face grew suddenly radiant. Had his heart at last been touched, and did he really care who walked with her in the gardens?

"O Henri," she said, "how kind of you to notice! But he is a good patriot. One does not ask in these days if a man be honest or wise, only, 'Is he a good patriot?'"

"That may be," said Henri shortly, "but this is a dangerous man. Why should you care for him?"

"Why should I *not*?" she asked tentatively. "Is there any reason why I should *not* care for any man?"

He looked steadily at her for a moment, and her eyes fell. "I think there *is* reason," he said, "why you should respect yourself and all who care for you."

The colour flew to her face. He guarded his words, but after all they could have no meaning but one—the awakening of a new love, stirred by jealousy. "Do you think," she asked, "that any man is dangerous who loves his country?"

"Certainly," he answered.

"I thought better than that of *you*, Henri," she said with gentle reproach. "Are you not a true patriot?"



"I hope there is none truer," he answered, with flashing eyes.

"Bravo!" she cried; then laying her hand gently on his arm, she added, "I am glad that you care for me so much that these things trouble you."

Henri smiled. A look of quick intelligence showed itself in his eyes. "I care for your best interest always, Annette," he said.

Annette frowned and withdrew her hand, continuing, with a saucy toss of her head, "I cannot think of any dearer interest that I have, Henri, than to be loved."

But Henri wilfully misunderstood her. "There may be higher interests even than that," he answered. "Be thankful to the friends who cherish those."

And giving her no opportunity for reply, he turned and walked away.



## XI.

### *TRUE AND FALSE.*

#### MARGUERITE'S STORY.

I HAVE heard people of little sense wish they could have lived in ancient times, when something strange was doing. But I suppose we each help to make our own small page of history, and every time has its own romance. Indeed, I doubt not a goodly chapter is writing now, though the world may not care to read it. For what with suspicions by day and alarms by night I fear my roses will be shortly fading. One of our wise ladies tells me they are faded already—that I shall lose my beauty presently, and no one will care to wed me. She never will lose *hers*, I am well assured. Yesterday the queen heard her jesting speeches, and smiling a little she took my hand and drew me nearer to her, chiding me for my foolish fears. But even in her chiding there were tears behind her lashes.

“Sire,” she said to his majesty, who had just entered the apartment, “behold how my maidens weep for your misfortunes.”

The king smiled kindly ; and M. d’Arblay, who was present, was bold enough to speak a word of his own, as that the white rose was to his mind more charming than the red. I am sure no one heeds what may be the mind of such a turn-coat as he, and it angered me that he should speak it in such august company.



However, M. d'Arblay's conduct was quite of a piece with everything else in these days. Even the king's valets are insolent. While his majesty was talking with M. de Besenval the other day, one of them thrust himself audaciously forward to hear what might be said. The king was so indignant that he would have taken the tongs to the fellow had not M. de Besenval prevented him.

Since that miserable day of the riot in Paris one hears naught but evil tidings. Everything for months before had been leading to that very day, and yet it came upon us like a thunder-clap. The king was off as usual at Meudon, and we others who could not hunt talked over the weather and the ball which was to be held in the evening, and decided upon the toilets which we should wear. And when at last, quite late in the day, a little town gossip reached our ears, it simply related to rumours of a grain riot, and to growing discontent in the Faubourg St. Antoine.

M. de Neale was absent from Versailles, as the Compagnie de Noailles is now stationed at Troyes. But M. d'Arblay, whom I encountered several times during the day, had a grave and anxious air, as though some evil tidings lay upon his mind, or some evil deeds upon his conscience—who can say? He even tried, I think, through some dark sayings, to warn me vaguely of a matter about which he knew quite too much for his loyalty to go unchallenged. But I would not understand.

"Oh, *laissez faire*," I said to him; "there is *always* trouble brewing with St. Antoine, or St. Marceau, or some other Parisian saint. But since his majesty has such perfect trust in the loyalty of his 'good people of Paris,' there is no cause to fear, monsieur. So good a king is safe with such a people."

And may the sweet saints intercede for me if my words were bitter beyond reason; yet, considering all that has passed, they cannot count against me. I do not wish in any way to recall the horror of that day in July, and if I might I would put from my memory the humiliation which has followed. Is it not



disgrace indeed that one must have a troop of citizens, called a "National Guard," set about the palace instead of our old loyal defenders? It is rare mockery to be told that these men, who are but *canaille* themselves, will guard us against the *canaille*. God fend us from such guarding!

Yet Henri Beaupré is among these citizen soldiers. I met him face to face one afternoon, and, notwithstanding that my heart was full of anger, I stopped to ask a question. Of course the answer was of no moment to me, yet, for the sake of Annette, I desired to know how much of a patriot this man might be. So I said to him, "Monsieur Beaupré, I should like to know if you had any hand in the terrible deeds of last week."

As soon as I had spoken I was sorry that I had not kept silence, for although I looked full in his face to ask my question, there was some witchery in his steadfast glance which made my own eyes waver and fall. Surely I have always been able to look in the face of a man when I asked him a question, and it angered me that this low-born fellow should have the power to put my glance to flight. It was simple insolence, no doubt, the spirit of liberty which makes the people higher than their king.

He had folded his arms, and stood as much at ease as my Lord d'Artois; and as he did not answer at once, I looked up again with much dignity. He was not smiling, and yet I vow there was something in his face which made me think that he would like to smile.

"Is that aught to you, lady?" he asked, and his eyes flashed at me—actually flashed. Truly there is danger in these days even from the eyes of such people.

My colour rose at this. How could I answer yes or no, with the man looking upon me as though I were one of the blessed saints?

"Monsieur Beaupré," I said, as calmly as I could under such astonishing circumstances, "I think it should be much to any



woman, be she high or low, to know that a man has been true to his conscience and to God—that his hands are not stained with innocent blood. I was thinking, however, of Manon, and of your cousin Annette;” and then I added defiantly, for the presumption of his words had forced me to be defiant, “Except for that, it is nothing whatever to me.”

I should have liked to put even more scorn into my voice, that I might show him in what light such a question as his should be regarded. It was of quite the same nature with the insolence of the valet who pushed himself before the king. Are all the people going mad, I wonder?

He looked steadily at me still and smiled. “I beg your pardon, madame,” he said, “for my want of courtesy. My hands are not stained with innocent blood; before God I swear it. Yet I will confess, at the risk of your displeasure, that the fall of the Bastille fills me with joy.”

“But you did nothing yourself against your king?” I asked with a shudder.

Then he grew very grave. “I will take no merit to myself,” he said. “Judged at your bar, I am afraid I should plead guilty, for you would test one’s motives and desires. Though I would willingly give my life for his majesty” (and, sweet Sainte Marguerite, he looked upon me as though he would also have given his life for me!), “I would have died rather than have harmed the people, who were driven to wrath by years of cruelty and by actual hunger.”

“I think you are no better than the rest, Monsieur Beaupré,” I answered, drawing away from him.

“I am no better than the worst,” he replied, “except as my God ‘puts a hedge about me.’ If I have kept free from the stain of blood, it is not because of any loyalty of my own heart to any earthly king, but by God’s grace, whom I serve. Whatever temptation I may have to undergo, I make sure he will never fail me.”

“Suppose you should think,” I said, “that he calls you to



blood-shedding for this cause or that. People have so many reasons when they want to do wrong. Suppose you should feel it your duty to slay helpless guards and carry old men's heads upon pikes?"

"I am not afraid that God or duty will ever call that way," he answered quickly; "such deeds are accursed."

"Well, take the other side, Henri Beaupré," I said. "Suppose he should cause you to face the mob, and be hung from a lamp-iron?"

"That might be," he answered with a smile, as though amused at my questions. "I scarcely think I shall be considered worth that trouble, Lady Marguerite."

"At least," I said, turning to go, "you will never cry, 'Vive la nation!'"

"I will never cry, 'Vive la nation!' without adding, 'Vive le roi!'" he answered.

"You will never cry, 'À bas l'Autrichienne!' as I heard some of those wretches cry in the crowd one day."

"I never will," he replied. "My heart is as loyal to my queen as any man's in France."

So then I forgave him all his sins, and forgot his insolent questions. I only thought of his loyalty to her majesty, and of the joy which she feels at the surety of one true heart. For my own part, I wish more of our courtiers were as strong of arm and brave of spirit as that Henri Beaupré is. He might not prove a hero more than M. le Marquis, but if he have not courage in his eye then I am far astray. As to the rest, of course we *have* some few brave men when one comes to think of them. There is M. de Bouillé now, who is doing such grand deeds at Nanci, and who is able to conquer regiments of men with an angry flash of his eye. We may also have heroes in our very midst, who would show themselves brave enough if occasion called them forth. We have also heroes like M. d'Artois, and the gallant Jules de Polignac, who are swift of foot and brave at vanishing from danger. And also heroes



like M. d'Orléans, who has much courage at pacifying the *canaille* and deceiving the king. *Le scélérat!* he is a reproach to the royal blood, with his blotched countenance and his evil, treacherous ways.

On that evil day when the Bastille was taken, his majesty, as I said, was busy with the chase, and knew naught about the matter until quite late at night, when M. de Liancourt informed him; and even then he received the tidings so complacently that no one would have supposed he had any personal concern with them. The dear, easy king! I am sometimes tempted to think that no pass could be very grievous to him wherein his dinner was speedily served and his horse ready for the chase. Alas! if he could once be aroused to see the danger to those he loves. If but once his eyes would flash and his voice thunder, one could take better heart. For *himself* he has no fear. The very next morning after the Bastille was taken he started for the Assembly, to smooth down the bristling feathers of his good people of Paris with loving words and promises. An enraged mob has no terrors, it seems, for him. I believe he could walk quite calmly into the midst of their pikes and cutlasses, if the good God called him thither; but turn his cannon on them—never!

Her majesty wept all that day; and we were fain to keep her company, feeling sure that the king had gone to certain death. Continual tales of horror reached us—tidings that poor M. Foulon had been doomed to death because of some foolish words which perhaps he never uttered. "Feed upon grass," indeed! Is it better, then, that the people should feed upon blood? The saints forbid! However, knowing how the people thirsted for the blood of M. Foulon, we were glad to hear at length that the poor soul had died peacefully in his bed. There had been a grand funeral for the pious old man—mourners and masses without number; and his soul, we trusted, had gone home to God.

But on that very afternoon a messenger came spurring in



hot haste to Versailles to say that poor old M. Foulon was not dead at all. He had been betrayed by a faithless servant, dragged from his hiding-place, and was at that very moment in the hands of his enemies. Such cruel hands! Sainte Marguerite guard those I love from ever falling into them! Think of it. An old man, with white hair and bowed form, who had faithfully served his king for many years, bound and dragged through the streets of Paris, his weak limbs almost failing under him. Think of him strung up, without a hearing and like a common felon, to the lamp-iron! Ay! his majesty's good people of Paris *should* eat grass indeed, for their hearts are black as hell. I wish they may.

There *have* been kings who would have risen up in wrath at such a word to succour a faithful servant in distress. There *have* been kings who would have set up a gallows right on the corner of that accursed Rue de la Vannerie, where poor old Foulon pleaded in vain for his life, and who would have hung the half of St. Antoine upon it. But this king will not spill a drop of Frenchmen's blood, though all his court hang dangling *à la lanterne*. Are not we also French, and do we not love him better than St. Antoine?

Now may our dear Lady forbid that I should cry for blood, and I a woman too. But innocent blood itself cries out for vengeance, and my heart was heavy for that poor old man. Even M. Berthier's murder did not touch me so deeply, for being brave and strong he could defend himself to the *last* against those who sought his life.

But this is the outcome of the matter. Not knowing how many more victims might be needed to appease this thirst for blood, our pusillanimous Messieurs de la Noblesse did most humbly yield two nights ago to the "spirit of the times"—the "popular voice"—the roar of the tiger, whichever one chooses to call it: a *name* is little. They gave up everything in the way of rights and privileges which they had to give. Better this, to be sure, than to yield one's life, *unless* one happened to be a hero.



And so, I understand, there is no more station or title for any of us. They call this the "abolition of privileges." It is said also that this sacrifice was a free and joyful one; that every man was moved with a strange enthusiasm. But one cannot quite believe such fairy tales. It seems likely that exaltation such as that will vanish in a night.

I had a long talk with Manon Beaupré yesterday. She looked so pale and wan that I had her sit in the easiest chair of all, although it was her own sweet will to stand. When I spoke of the note with which I had summoned her, the tears came into her eyes—not gentle, quiet drops as such a staid little woman should shed, but angry tears, which were suddenly dashed away. There is something about these Huguenots which makes the gentlest of them seem strong at times. And what is this, I wonder? They have nothing which we have not; and we have all the saints and angels, and the blessed Mother besides. Yet I have heard of gentle Huguenot women who died for their belief; while I, who am in the one true fold, feel sadly afraid that I should never die for *mine*.

Her tears being dashed aside, Manon made answer,—

"I liked it not, lady, that you should speak of my father in such terms as those."

"Ah, yes," I said laughing. "I believe I did call him a dragon, Manon; but I meant nothing unkind, foolish child."

"Forgive me, lady," she said. "You have always been very kind, and I shall most heartily pray for you."

"Now, what shall you ask for me?" I questioned her, drawing my chair up close beside her, that I might the better watch her face.

"I shall pray for the best gifts," she answered bravely—"that you may be taught to cast aside your saints and images, and seek God through his dear Son, our Saviour."

Whereat I vowed to myself, and do maintain it, that this demure little woman has the spirit of a martyr. The colour did not even rise in her cheeks, although she knew that she



was attacking what was dearest to my heart. In truth, I believe she owns no aristocracy but one of grace.

"Really, Manon," I answered, "you are very kind; but I care not much for such prayers. I love the saints; and without our blessed Mother I should tremble to appear before God, even God the Son, whose name be blessed!"

"Christ's mother cannot intercede," she answered obstinately. "She was only a mortal woman, and herself had need of chiding. No one can plead for us more tenderly than the dear Lord who has known our sorrows."

"Our blessed Lady is the 'mother of sorrows,'" I replied. "In great things, perhaps, one might have courage to go straight to the Lord, though even that, except for holy men and women, would seem a little rash. But, my dear Manon, how about all the trifles, the little matters of daily life, too small for aught but the dear Mother to think of?"

"There is nothing too little or too great for Him who 'feeds the sparrows,'" said Manon thoughtfully, "and who makes the seeds to grow."

"Well," I said, laughing at her grave face and her resolute air, "what else shall you ask for me, Manon?"

"I will ask that you may be kept from the allurements and falsehood and evil counsel of one whom you serve," she answered, her colour rising a very little.

"Do you mean her majesty?" I cried, hastily starting to my feet. "Do you dare to speak such false and treasonable words to me, and of my dearest lady? In truth, you foolish Manon, you need not pray for me at all, for I want none of such prayers as yours to work a malison upon the one I love the best. So if you will not pray for her majesty, you may cease praying for me."

And Manon answered, the tears rising again to her eyes, "Be not angry, dear lady; I labour with all my soul to pray for the queen, for I doubt not she sorely needs the prayers of all God's people. Moreover, we are bidden to love our enemies."



"But she is no one's enemy," I answered with much indignation. "She loves all France; and even your brother has sworn fealty to her."

At this she flushed a little. "My brother is a patriot," she said. "He had far better content himself with swearing allegiance to the King of kings. It is better to be the children of our Father in heaven than the servants of an earthly king."

"Cannot you Huguenots serve both God and the king?" I asked her then; and she answered,—

"We have borne the wrath of kings for many years, and we have not failed to pray for them; but we are *God's* servants. My grandfather was a preacher of the Word, and suffered much for his faith; and *his* grandfather was shot like a dog on the day of St. Bartholomew."

She did not seem to be boasting, this strange little woman, as one should boast of titles or houses or lands. She sat with her hands crossed, one above the other, and spoke quietly; while her eyes had a far-away look, as though she spoke more to herself than to me. And her humble attitude reminded me to ask her of herself, and whether *she* ever suffered from want or hunger. The colour flamed to her very forehead at my question.

"The Lord provides," she said simply. "We have all that we deserve. I should take great shame if we had plenty while others about us are starving."

"Now tell me truly, Manon," I said, taking her hand, which she was reluctant to give me. "I have more than I need; it would give me pleasure to share a little with you."

"That cannot be," said Manon, drawing away her hand. "We are poor, but we have never lived upon the bounty of the rich."

"But see," I said, laughing, "the wheel of fortune is going about so fast, we may all be poor to-morrow. Perhaps—who



knows?—it may be I some day coming to you and asking a piece of bread.”

“Don’t jest, dear lady,” she said. “If you ever came to me in trouble, God knows I would give you all I had.”

“And you would want me to *take* it?” I asked. “So be willing to take from me.”

But she shook her head, although she smiled a little. “Things will go better after a while,” she said. “Just now my father has no work, nor Henri; but Henri will have money from the nation presently. I could not take your gold, dear lady.”

Surely there is much cloud-shifting in the atmosphere to mar all rightful seeing; and Manon and I, at best, see things from such opposite points of view.

And not Manon and I *alone*. I have come to have no patience with M. d’Arblay. He tells me that M. Foulon’s death was a needful sacrifice—a sentiment which savours too much of ancient heathen rites, when human lives were offered to propitiate the gods. He vows that the “gigantic self-immolation” of the *noblesse* on the fourth of August was *sublime*. It was equal, he says, to the deed of the great Curtius, who leaped into the gulf in the Roman Forum—a sight to “make the angels weep for joy.” I don’t think angels weep at all; and when they rejoice, I am sure it is not over such penitent sinners as those. And I think it is better to be disloyal out and out than to explain oneself with mincing phrases—to seek to serve both the nation and the king.

“When one’s honours,” I said to him, “have come through a long line of noble ancestors, or have been bestowed for deeds of merit by the king, it seems to me one should set a higher price upon them than to cast them at the feet of the *canaille*. I am sure his majesty does not really approve.”

“You defame the king,” he answered. “He would approve of any patriotic course if he were separated from evil counsellors, especially that one most foolish counsellor of all.”



I answered coldly that I did not understand. For I had never before heard M. d'Arblay speak an evil word of her majesty; and knowing how gracious she had been toward him, his words filled me with dismay.

"I mean," he replied, "that it would be well for the nation if the queen would resign her post as chief counsellor, and leave his majesty at liberty to act like a man."

"In following her counsels he would always act the man," I replied with wrath in my heart. "And, M. d'Arblay, the queen has been your friend; if you are traitor to her, you need not look for friendliness from me. I wish that you could see her with my eyes."

"Your eyes cannot see well, *ma belle* Marguerite," he answered, "for there are tears in them this minute."

"But such tears do not hinder me from seeing clearly," I replied.

"Do not shed them, sweet heart," he exclaimed with a certain audacious tenderness which sent the blood in anger to my face. "No troubles of king or queen are worthy of such blessed tears;" and bending quickly forward he seized my hand and pressed it to his lips.

"Monsieur," I cried, drawing it quickly away, "I have never given you cause to call me by endearing names or to treat me in such irreverent fashion."

"Ah, yes," he returned with an indignant air, "I had forgotten that her majesty the queen has suddenly shifted her ground, and that your future is otherwise decreed. But I am not ignorant of court stratagems. You said truly her majesty used to seem my friend; now I know her better. And you—you would sacrifice the cryings of your own heart if she bade you do it; you would—"

"My heart is a sensible one," I interrupted quickly; "it does not cry, monsieur. But you are mistaken if you think that you hold any interest there."

"Oh, I understand," he answered bitterly. "A woman will



outdo the courage of the Spartan lad to cover up the gnawing at her heart. Why should you think it shame to love where you are loved again?"

At this my anger leaped into my eyes. "I do *not* love you, M. d'Arblay," I cried; "by the dear saints I swear it! And even if I did, whoever hopes to wear my colours must prove himself true to the white cockade."

And at this he began passionately to protest his loyalty with such words as a man will use towards the woman he hopes to win. And, furthermore, he tried to make me promise that if I were in any danger, or had need of a friend, I would turn to him—that I would give him a sort of right, in short, to watch upon my safety. And this after all his disloyal speeches!

Finally, I answered, half laughing, in order to be quit of his pleading, "I suppose that if I am in danger I shall be thankful for succour at whatever hands. And as to watching, God's angels and the blessed saints watch over us, and we are none the worse." And then I added, quite demurely, "If ever you have occasion to save my life, M. d'Arblay, pray do not hesitate to do so."

But M. d'Arblay did not laugh. Such men as he are always looking on the darker side, taking a tragic view of life. M. de Neale will laugh with me when I choose; and in truth he is none the worse for it. He can be grave enough upon occasion. His pleasant temper and his ready smile are not, I think, upon the surface, but flow rather from some hidden spring of sweet contentment. And I have a fancy he would still smile on if the world went wrong with him.

As to M. d'Arblay's audacious fancy, I never gave him ground to cherish it; although doubtless I have said many foolish things to many foolish people. He has pleased me sometimes better than another. Perhaps, if one must be true, I have given him more smiles than were altogether needful; but I never meant more than a smile, and a woman who is young and light-hearted cannot always refrain from smiling.



Must one, then, handle the hearts of these strong fellows as though they were Sèvres porcelain?

Some two weeks ago my maid Annette begged for leave to go to Caen and see her father. She had heard by letter that he was ill, and had also lost all his money by the poorness of the crops. And since my heart was too weak to refuse her, I gave her the money for her diligence journey and a few *louis-d'or* besides for her father's needs. Yesterday she returned to me cheerier and more assiduous than ever. There are no fingers so deft as Annette's, and none can handle one's tresses so lovingly as she.

She is so keen-witted and observant that she must have seen my delight at her coming; and though she was sad at first, she soon began to smile when she saw the readiness with which I sent away the maid who had filled her place. And then I asked about her father, and if it was pleasant to be at home.

"The poor man," she replied with a sigh, as she softly smoothed my hair above the cushion, "he was so grateful for the gold. He said the good God would reward madame. But he is in great want. Ah, madame, I never saw such want! The crops were not bad; but the farmers hoard the grain, and whenever the people can they rob the farmers. My father's grain has all been seized, madame; but my father is a patriot."

"Fie, Annette!" I cried; "what reason has your father to be a patriot when the patriots rob him? That is not wise. And what cause have the people for rising when the good king will give them all they desire?"

"Ay, indeed, what cause?" repeated Annette, pulling out with a caressing touch one or two light rings of hair upon my forehead—Annette is an *artiste* at one's toilet. "The people are *si bêtes*, madame; their heads are dull and heavy; they cannot understand the goodness of the king and the *noblesse*. The sight of the regiments and the officers maddens them. They cannot understand, madame, that the soldiers of the good king will not fire on his children—for the king is a father to France."



"Well indeed, Annette," I said, "if the soldiers of the good king would but once fire on the people, the whole land would be the better for it. In my mind—" and here, as I well remember, I gave a little cry of pain, for Annette pulled my hair most cruelly in arranging the curls at my neck.

She fell upon her knees and kissed my hands, the good Annette. "Alas that I should unwittingly have hurt madame!" she cried; "may the good saints pardon me!"

I laughed at her penitence and forgave her readily. Annette is usually very careful.

"Alas!" she said, the tears coming to her eyes as she rose, "the people are like tigers, madame. I cannot get the thought of poor Major Belzaunce from my heart; he comes to me by day and by night. They say, to be sure, that he was an evil-minded man, with a black soul, and proud, and cruel to the people. The people hated him as they hate the devil. But one hears a great many lies; and of course since he was faithful to the king, no one should have ventured to blame him."

"Why, what happened to Major Belzaunce, Annette?" I asked quickly. I remembered having heard my father speak of him, and I knew him to be a good and loyal man.

"He roused the anger of the people," said Annette softly, wiping away a tear; "he bade his men tear away the national cockades from the soldiers who wore them."

"Surely, Annette," I said, "that was a right honourable and loyal deed, and I honour Major Belzaunce for his courage.—*Annette*, you will kill me if you drive the pins so far into my head!"

Annette kissed my hair and began to wring her hands. She was so distracted, she said, that she scarcely knew what she was doing. If madame had only been through all that she had experienced, madame would know; and the thought of that good Major Belzaunce filled her with terror yet. "For, madame, the people brought cannon and fired upon the poor soul and his men until they caused him to surrender. I saw it with my



own eyes. And while he was being led to prison, the crowd fell upon him and tore him in pieces. On my honour, madame, they *tore him in pieces* before our eyes. And it is also quite true—for I saw it—that a woman in the crowd pulled out his heart and devoured it,—*devoured it*, madame !” \*

“Ah, sweet Sainte Marguerite !” I cried, starting to my feet ; “do you lie to me, Annette ? Was it really a *woman* ? or do fiends even now walk the earth in human breasts ?”

I felt the blood throb in my veins with loathing and horror. I was too outraged to weep, but I thought from very faintness that I could have died. Annette stood leaning against my dressing-table with her face covered, weeping bitterly. And I began to think how terrible it must have been to this kind-hearted creature actually to *witness* such horrors when the very mention of them had so undone me.

And it is all quite true, for this very morning I received a letter from my father which tells of *jaqueries* all over the country ; and the officers of government, having no longer any power, are themselves filled with fear—one is thankful if they are not even in league with the *canaille*—and no one looks for protection.

“When some atrocious murder is in contemplation,” says my father, “the mob compel the municipal officers to march with them and give it sanction ; and the mayor who dares to resist the popular fury is strung up like an outlaw.”

And then, alas for the delusive hopes with which I had quieted my heart ! he proceeded to tell me of an assault upon his own château only a few nights before. The rioters obliged him to sign away all his rent-claims, and to give back to his tenants the rent which he had been receiving from them for three years past. Being so poor himself he could scarcely compass it. But, thank God ! his life is safe. He has always so loved his people that he thinks they will not disturb him again. He is thankful, he says, to have escaped the fate of his good

\* Taine's “History of the French Revolution.”



neighbour ten leagues away, who was cut to pieces in the presence of his wife not eight days since.

Oh, my God, what horrors! They take the beauty from the sunshine, and I have no longer any desire to laugh and be happy. I have written to implore my father to fly to Coblenz. If it were not for my duty here, and the sake of my dear lady, I also would go with him.

In conclusion, my father begged me to hesitate no longer in accepting M. de Nesle. I need, he says, a strong arm to protect me in these perilous times, and it is the great desire of his heart to see me wedded. And since I may not add a feather's weight to the sorrows which my noble father already has to bear, I must needs consent as freely as I may.



## XII.

### *MANON IS PERPLEXED.*

THE summer has been full of strange awakenings, and now, thank God ! we begin at last to breathe the air of freedom.

At least so people say ; yet the poor still suffer, and I sometimes think our taste of liberty has been bought at too terrible a price. It is true that Annette paid a visit to Caen this summer, and saw many things which greatly delighted her heart. Grand châteaux, which had stood for ages, and were stout and strong when she passed through a year before, were now—so great has been the vengeance of the people—but heaps of blackened ruins everywhere. The seigneurs have fled to escape from death, and even the castles which are not burned are barren and desolate. Annette said it was a glorious sight—that the air of freedom was “health to her soul ;” she drew in great breaths of it, and felt herself grow stronger. When she had passed through before there had been music and revelry in the castles—the great lords grinding the peasants the while, and laughing at their groans ; while ill-looking hovels and untilled fields covered all the country-side. For what was the use of tilling fields when some one else should reap, or planting vines for others to eat the fruit ? But now the *peasants* laugh and dance. The wheel of fortune has gone at least this far round that the nobles are under it.

Annette says it is better that a few nobles should perish by



violence than that hundreds of innocent little ones should die every year by inches.

The poor people having no fear of God before their eyes, how should they know better than to take vengeance to themselves? May God remember their sorrows rather than their sins!

It may be worse in the provinces, as Annette says, but surely we also have "fallen on evil times." Folk say the queen weeps. It is well that she should weep for ever if her tears could wash away her sins. For Annette also tells us of dreadful reports about her majesty—things which are right well known, but which we, being so near the palace, had never heard. She and the Comte d'Artois have been scheming to have the army fall on Paris and massacre all the people. Nor is this all; for it seems that men are talking everywhere of her plots to poison the king her husband, hoping in this way to reign herself in the name of her little son.\* Others say that she has set her heart to burn the good city of Paris. Since, after all is said, she is a woman, I would gladly disbelieve all the horrible things which are laid to her charge, and which are too many to be recorded. God send that her plots, being so well known, may be speedily confounded.

It is such times as these that prove the strength of brotherhood. We have had glorious deeds of self-renunciation for the sake of all. Not only the *noblesse* have opened their hands, but the people also. All the world has been filled with a frenzy of sacrifice; and "giving to the poor" in such a time of trouble is surely "lending to the Lord." The zeal shown by the poor themselves puts to shame some who have abundance and who spare it. I thought reverently of *One* who gave *himself* for the needs of all, and who wants nothing less than the hearts of all in recompense.

Annette came in one morning while all the world was giving,

\* Arthur Young, who wonders at the systematic efforts which had been made to rouse the popular mind against the queen.



and we talked the matter over for hours together. She had not many jewels, my brave Annette, but the few she had—a brooch, a pair of ear-rings, and a ring which had been her mother's—she gave without a thought of hesitation. What Henri gave I cannot surely say. He told me that he could give no money, lest he should rob those whom God has given to his care. But I know some rare old books which he has treasured for years are missing. Annette and he were both so filled with enthusiasm that I thought their kindred zeal would have brought them closer together. And yet, while she was in Caen, and I asked Henri one day if it were not very dull when Annette was not running out and in, he answered absently, "Why really, Manon, I had not noticed it." Now what can one do with such a man as that?

Annette goes often to the Assembly Hall. That is where all the world goes now. My father is always there when he has the time. He takes note of everything that is going forward, and we talk it over at our meals. When one talks constantly one forgets how little there is to eat, and is less observant of the quality of one's food. So that when Annette coaxed me one day to go to the Assembly with her, I already knew what the Salle des Menus was like, and also much about the sessions. The hall, having been used for king's service, was very grand, but none too grand for those noble men who are making a constitution. However, the session was very dull. I could not understand nor hear one-half of what was said. I caught even Annette in the midst of a yawn, which she strove hard to conceal. It must be wearisome for the worthy deputies to talk so long over every little point, and waste so many precious words to no avail. But I could not help the wish that, being so faithful, they would strive more after unity. Instead of having a "right side" and a "left side," I should have them "all of one mind, in the fear of the Lord."

It occurred to me also that the "*côté gauche*" tried to oppose the "*côté droit*" in everything. This may be a wise method



for "proving all things" and "holding fast that which is good;" but I think if they strove as hard to agree as they do to differ, France might be free the sooner.

At first, as I said, it was very dull; but when they came to decide concerning the king's veto, the excitement was great, and even the lookers-on in the gallery shouted out their opinions. Annette's friend, M. Douet, was not behind the others; for once, when some one on the Right side had made a speech which angered him, he cried out savagely, "Give the Austrian a veto also; that will feed the people."

Annette laughed and clapped her hands, and so did some other hot-headed people in the gallery; but it seemed to me that M. Douet took note of no applause but hers.

"I hate all aristocrats," I heard him whisper, "from the king to the valet. But there is one who is neither king nor valet whom I hate more than all."

The anger in his voice made me tremble, although I had no cause. But Annette asked him laughing,—

"Pray who is this aristocrat that can call such lightning flashes from your eyes, Monsieur Douet?"

"That I shall tell you some day, Mademoiselle Annette," he answered, "but not here."

And of that I was very glad; for if Annette can wish to be the *confidante* of such a man as that, for myself I had far rather he kept his own counsel.

I drew a sigh of relief when the session was ended. I do not know how other people look at these things, but to me it seems that men who will sit day after day, and talk over the same dull questions with such self-sacrificing ardour, deserve at least the thanks of their country. They must needs be true, every one of them, for they have a mighty censor always over them in the galleries. It would need great courage to vote after an aristocrat's conscience, dealing falsely with the people, and betraying their trust. The people will not stand falsehood or treachery. They are watching their own affairs. Some of the folk about



me—above all the women—had such fierce, determined looks that they would make any aristocrat tremble. And when anything was said to displease them, they shook their fists in the air and cried loudly, “A la lanterne.” I knew that the rights of the people must be cared for; but truly I would not let such evil-looking women have so much to say about it.

A week ago my sister came to Versailles for a few days to see if change of air would help the little Félice. It seems to me that change of food is more needful yet, and a quiet life the one most needful thing of all for that tired baby. Poor child! she has come into an evil world, and at a troublous time.

In the cool of the afternoon I took the little creature to the gardens of the palace. It was such joy to see her pretty glee, and her delight when the troops went by. The red coats of the Swiss Guards pleased her greatly. “Si joli! si joli!” she cried, clapping her hands; and then she reached them out to a great strong fellow who was guarding one of the entrance-ways. The man, who had a pleasant, kindly face, laughed at this and took her in his arms, where she sat stroking his beard with her thin little hand; and he kissed her twice before he gave her back to me. Perhaps he has little children of his own in those far away Swiss mountains of whom he was thinking then.

We saw him passing back and forth many times as we sat watching the water playing from the fountains and the red colours of the sky glowing in the basins, and every time the little Félice threw laughing kisses at him.

While we were resting so a very beautiful lady came near to us and began talking to the little one. She said that such pretty uniforms were a grand show for innocent eyes, and that the sweet fresh air would make her stronger.

“Is it your own little one, my child?” she asked me gently.

“Mine! oh no, madame. It is my sister’s,” I replied.

“Ah!” said the lady with a sigh, “in these days the women are blessed that have no children. They have not to hear them crying for bread with none to give them.”



She put up her hand with a swift movement to her eyes, as though she were wiping away a tear, and I thought, "What a dear lady! In the midst of her wealth and her beauty she cares for God's poor, and meditates on their misfortunes. Surely the God of the poor will bless and care for her."

"Dear lady," I said, "you are quite right. When I see little children upon the streets that beg for bread, I am glad I have no little ones of my own."

The lady held out her arms to Félice, who shrank backward frightened and clung to me.

They say little ones are wiser than we in choosing those who are worthy of their love; but I am sure my Félice must have been wise indeed for her years—being but three—to find anything unlovely in that beautiful lady.

Far from being angry at the perverseness of the child, the lady gave a low musical laugh, and patted the little head which turned wilfully away. "Ah!" she said, "the *petite* is like those about her: she mistrusts all who wear laces and velvets. God help her.—Little one," she said then, turning to Félice, with a great tenderness in her voice, "we are not all hard-hearted, we aristocrats; we do not all begrudge you your poor little crusts."

"Ay, madame," I hastened to reply, since Félice still shrank away and buried her face in my bosom, "we know well that all are not like the Austrian queen. Indeed, how should one of an alien race know how we suffer? She is like a step-mother set to nourish little children."

The lady seemed lost in thought for a moment, then she said, half to herself, and sighing heavily, "Yes, yes; one who draws the heart of the father away."

"Ay, madame; I have always said so," I cried. "I know the king loves his people."

"The king *did* love his people," she replied, laying much stress upon the one small word; "he *did* desire his people's happiness. But now his heart is turned away by evil counsellors."



"You ought to understand these things, madame," I said; "you have every means of knowing."

"I am at court truly," she answered, "but I love my country. Every day my heart is grieved. No one is true."

"Ah! do you know the Lady Marguerite de Clairac?" I exclaimed; for although I do not quite approve of that fair lady, I cannot help the feeling that her heart is true.

"Yes, I know her," she replied, with a sigh which seemed to come from an overburdened soul. And when I said that I felt quite sure of the Lady Marguerite's truth, she shook her head and smiled.

"I also thought her true," she answered. "It makes me sad to see one of such bright promise going so far astray. The way is slippery when one once has taken it."

And I exclaimed under my breath, "Oh, not the Lady Marguerite! she would never go astray."

"No, no," she answered; "I will take back all my words if they mar such gentle trustfulness. *Faith* is such a delightful thing. Keep your beautiful dreams. Fancy still that *some one* in that evil court is pure and true."

And while I stood bewildered at her words, this good lady patted once more the little head resting on my shoulder, and with a gracious nod turned down the long avenue which led to the palace, leaving me with trouble at my heart. Surely I had thought my own thoughts of the Lady Marguerite, yet I had never thought her guilty of any other fault than great frivolity. And now the fear weighed hard upon me that if this strange lady's words were true, I should in all right conscience tell my brother of them, that he might know what evil thoughts may lurk behind so sweet a face, and be no longer entangled in such foolishness. For though his love could never be more than the veriest visionary fancy, yet even this might cause him bitter sorrow. I have no trust in the adoration of saints, and surely a saint with a tarnished soul not even a *man* could approve. But while I turned these thoughts about within my mind, I



saw M. Foucher coming toward me with an air of eagerness which seemed out of place at such a time as this.

I forgot to mention that M. Foucher has been much about the house of late. I have always known that it gave him pleasure to talk with my father, but it never occurred to me until a little while ago that he had any special interest in *me*. This thought first came to my mind when I noticed the heed which he paid to my poor remarks; and though I had always thought before that I disliked the man, in these little matters one can sometimes be deceived. And I must confess, being only an ordinary maiden, I was pleased that my simple thoughts should find favour with such a wise and eloquent man. And then, before I had time to consider, he began to ask me to go with him here and there, and to send me little notes in regard to his comings and goings. All this was pleasing to my father, who has great regard for M. Foucher's patriotism. For my own part, I think it ill becomes any maiden to be staying her mind upon love and marriage when the country is in trouble. When self-denial and suffering abound on every hand, one should not even wish to be happy. Moreover, I have always been led to believe with St. Paul that "she who is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband," while "she who is unmarried careth for the things of Christ."

It is not that I put faith in the old monastic rule, or any other Popish fancy; but of my own self I have known how, even when one is not "bound to a husband" and has no special hindering love, the things of the world do still "enter in and choke the word, that it becometh unfruitful." So though I have been always kind to M. Foucher, I have tried, even in my own heart, to go no further. And when I saw him coming toward me in the palace gardens with extended hands, I was more grieved than happy.

"We are betrayed, Manon!" he cried excitedly; "we are betrayed! The king has brought hireling soldiers upon us."



"O Monsieur Foucher!" I cried, "surely his majesty would not set foreigners to fire upon the French."

"Look yonder," he whispered hoarsely, "at those bearded men in the green uniforms lined with red! That is the Régiment de Flandre; that is the entering wedge—*voilà!* the first drop which warns us that soon the waterfloods will burst and overwhelm us."

I had looked at those green-coated foreigners more than once that afternoon and wondered; now I looked and *feared*. The beautiful lady had spoken wisely when she said that the king loved his people no longer. She also had known of his treachery.

M. Foucher turned with me, talking still, and we walked slowly homeward. Even in his excitement he had the thoughtfulness to offer me his arm; and my fear was not so great but that I could remember to refuse it. The little Félice had sobbed herself to sleep, and M. Foucher took her in his arms and carried her with her head upon his shoulder; and sleeping thus, she did not know who held her. As we entered the house I heard loud voices from our little sitting-room—the neighbour Gascoigne's among them—and I knew either she had been telling my father the news, or he had told it to her. "And we must stand with folded hands, and cry, 'God save his majesty!' all the same," said Mère Gascoigne as we came upon the scene. "It's nothing, of course—a few hundred more mouths to feed when there was no food before! But it will be *something* if we taste their cannon presently."

"There'll be cannon to answer cannon," said my father. "There is no need to be fretted over a handful of green-coated men. Let the king look to his crown, for there is not a village or hamlet in France but is arming or ready to arm."

"Can you tell us, sir," said M. Foucher excitedly, "what is the meaning of this recent outrage?"

"Oh yes," said my father, snuffing the air disdainfully; "there are *riots* abroad—bread riots and corn riots. And the National Guard at the palace have much to do and are wearied.



That is all, monsieur. But be you wise, young man, and mark my words—the hungry will not be crushed. God looks out for the hungry.”

My father never spoke a truer word. God does remember the hungry. “When he maketh inquisition for blood,” he will count their tears.

Mère Gascoigne shook her head. “It is not only a few green-coats,” she answered. “They say it is as much as one’s life is worth to get through the streets in Paris. What with patrols on this side and patrols on that, one has no good of one’s liberty at all.”

“Ay, that is so,” spoke up my sister, who, being such a gentle little woman, rarely speaks at all. “One has to be challenged at every turn of a corner. You cannot go as you will, but have to walk in order like one of the military. But this is not the king’s doing.”

“It is the doing of false patriots then,” said my father,—“king’s men at heart, ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing’ who trouble the flock.”

I left them talking and slipped away to my own room, being troubled less even about the shadow of the king’s anger which hung above us than for the words which the lady in the garden had spoken. For I felt that I could not justly leave Henri in ignorance of them. Yet knowing that she was not only a great lady, but also in God’s sight a poor motherless girl, I grieved to speak evil of her. I prayed long upon the matter, yet seemed to get small light upon my prayers; and I have since been led to think that this may have been because I was set to follow my own counsel.

So when at last I found Henri alone, I was too much excited to begin the matter softly, as I should have done; for which I take great censure to myself.

It was just at dusk one evening when Henri had been sitting with my father, trying to make him look at matters in a kindlier light. But my father was in an ill-humour even with Henri,



and presently rose in anger and went up to his room. I chose this time, with small show of wisdom, for what I had to say.

I began by asking him if he ever saw the Lady Marguerite now, and he turned on me with some surprise that I should have asked the question.

"Often," he answered; "at a distance. I see also the north star every night, Manon."

"O Henri, do not fret over her!" I cried, putting up my arms to clasp his neck; "she is unworthy that any honest man should waste a hopeless love upon her."

But Henri took my hands and put them from him, holding them firmly while he looked in my eyes, and "What do you mean, Manon?" he asked sharply. And then I began to repent that I had spoken at all. Being so little learned in matters of the heart, I had not known how hard it is to deal with a man who is in love. It occurred to me that even I, Henri's sister, might have presumed too much upon the old love between us.

"I will not say another word if it vexes you," said I.

"However, you *shall* say another word, Manon," he returned with much decision, and yet not quite unkindly. And though I would have been right glad to hold my peace, yet being bidden I was forced to tell him of my meeting with the lady in the garden.

"And what said she of *my* lady?" asked Henri with angry disdain.

"She would not say much," I answered, "for she saw that I was troubled. She told me, with tears in her eyes, that it grieved her to see one of such bright promise as the Lady Marguerite going so far astray. Dear Henri, I suppose no one can keep pure and true in such an evil court."

Henri had frowned darkly while I was speaking, and his eyes glowed upon me like smouldering fires.

"I am very sorry to tell you, Henri," I sobbed; "but painful as it is for both of us, I felt that it was right to speak."



Henri laughed scornfully.

"Did you really think, Manon," he asked, "that I would credit such contemptible slander? I know the Lady Marguerite well, for I am always watching her. I would risk my life upon the whiteness of her soul. One look into her eyes should be enough. A true knight does not mistrust his lady."

"She is not *your* lady, Henri," I faltered.

"No," he answered, waiting a moment after he had spoken, and then adding kindly, "Manon, that we may for ever make an end of this matter which seems to trouble you, I would like you to answer a question. Did you ever suppose it possible that I thought this high-born lady would return my love, or that in my wildest visions I hoped to have her for my wife?"

"I could not know, Henri, what your wildest visions might be," I answered meekly, but beginning to breathe more freely.

"That surely would be the wildest vision," he answered quickly. But even as he spoke he turned and began restlessly pacing the room. "It is best to look matters bravely in the face, Manon," he said. "You taxed me once with loving her, and as I am always frank with you, and felt no shame to love without return, I answered in good faith that you were right. That is all. She will never be my lady—no; but I can love her all the same."

I could have died almost, I felt so grieved and so filled with anger at my own misdoing. Though he made a brave show of cheerfulness, I could catch a note of despair in his voice; and I know so little of these things. Is it so miserable, I wonder, to love, if one cannot be loved again? I have always heard that love was more blessed in the giving than in the receiving; but Henri's sigh might well disprove the saying.

He saw the tears in my eyes, and answered lightly, stooping to kiss my forehead, "It is only on the Lady Marguerite's account that you have given me pain, Manon. For the rest, such slander has no more meaning to me than the curses one hears in the street."



"But, Henri," I ventured, "is it not wretched to love—so?"

Henri laughed softly. "I would not exchange my love for a throne and a kingdom," he said, with some seeming of cheerfulness. "I am living in the hope that I may do her service if there should be need. Meanwhile, Manon, I am such a foolish fellow that one word of hers to me is worth as much as his lady's kiss to many a happier man."

"O Henri!" I cried—and may God forgive my foolish tongue—"if that is so, what would a kiss be worth?"

Henri grew suddenly pale, and put me from him. I could almost have fancied that his lips trembled, but of this I am not sure. Perhaps, if I should ever feel it right to care for M. Foucher, I shall have better understanding of these things, and know how to choose my words in speaking to a lover.

But presently he said, quite calmly, "Manon, I am going now, and I am sorry if I have pained you; for surely no kinder heart than yours will ever beat for me."

"O Henri!" I cried with one desperate effort, throwing my arms about his neck, "it never could be that you might love Annette?"

"It never could by any peradventure," he answered, almost laughing, as one would laugh at the folly of a child. "Don't let the idea occur to you again."

So on the whole my speaking has done no good, but only possible harm. I cannot help thinking that this was all because I prayed to God to show me what to do with a heart which was wholly set to do the thing I chose.

As to the green and red uniforms, Henri laughed at my fears. He says the National Guard have themselves asked for this relief, being overburdened to maintain the public order. Since soldiers are necessary, it is quite as well, according to his mind, to have one regiment as another. Henri is always full of fair words—his faith in Lafayette and the National Guard is unbounded; yet my father and M. Foucher, when all is said, may prove the truer prophets.



### XIII.

#### WHITE COCKADES.

MARGUERITE'S STORY.

October 1, 1789.

WE are having beautiful autumn days, and the air is so soft and balmy that it seems great pity all the world cannot live upon sunshine. And truly hope dawns upon us with the glorious weather. The king has great store of loyal hearts, and what is better than these?

Ever since the Bastille was taken, we at Versailles have been in a fever of unrest. In spite of body-guards, and the Swiss, and the Cent Suisses, no one ever felt safe though sleeping in one's bed. For myself, whenever I closed my eyes the ghastly head of M. Foulon seemed to rise and gaze upon me; or I saw the bodies of those slaughtered soldiers whom even the *foi d'officier* could not save.

No one in the palace, except perchance his trustful majesty, has any faith in the protection of the National Guard. They are men of kindred conscience with those who would not fire upon the dastardly crowd in Paris. And in spite of the loyal protestations and effusions of M. de Lafayette, one cannot rely upon his patriotic *citoyen* troops. But one must not say it—one must beware of one's speech in these days of liberty! The major of these guards—a man by the name of Lecointre—who was a mere citizen shopkeeper a few weeks ago, has grown to be a doughty warrior of the keenest vision and quickest ear. He spies out every affront or discourtesy. To me, his very



presence here is the gravest *affront* of all ; and there could not be a greater act of *discourtesy* than that the palace should be turned into a caravansary for the coming and the going of his troops.

So it was not the need of more men in uniform, but of a few brave soldiers with loyal hearts, which induced his majesty to summon the Régiment de Flandre to Versailles. These brave foreigners know what is due to the estate of royalty, and their officers are loyal gentlemen. All the world knew also, or might have known, that the Régiment de Flandre was coming, for neither the king nor his ministers made any secret of it ; and no one seemed to take offence until the people, St. Antoine and the rest, began looking at the matter with Major Lecointre's eyes.

The king's body-guard welcomed the new defenders with open arms ; and to show their brotherhood in the same good cause, they resolved to give a dinner to the officers of the Flanders regiment. And the dinner, by leave of her majesty, was served in the queen's opera-house, where all the court were bidden to attend. Could anything have been more reasonable than that ?

M. de Nesle was absent from the court on a mission for the king, and truly it was on that evening that I felt the first real regret at his absence ; I knew so well the joy he would have felt at this demonstration of love for the king. Also, before he left I had given him my answer ; and I trust, through the blessing of our dear Lady, it may be an answer of peace. It is a great venture to trust one's happiness to any man, and I do not persuade myself that I have any emotion of love toward this gentleman. His quiet courtesy wearies me a little. I suppose my life will be monotonous enough. One might as well take holy vows, and retire altogether from a sinful world. Yet what is a motherless girl like me to do but to follow the counsels of her father and her king ?

While the dinner was in progress this evening, I stood near her majesty, watching a game of cards which she was playing



with the king. I could see that she had been weeping; yet whenever she caught the notes of some loyal melody from the Halle de l'Opéra, a little smile would flit across her face, and she would look up from the game to listen. She played very carelessly, her thoughts being so far away; and once or twice his majesty, who seemed quite wrapped in the game, gently checked her inattention.

His majesty has a soul which it would take an earthquake or a round of artillery to move.

At length the queen, in turning aside to listen, said with a smile to one of her officers,—

"Ah, monsieur, such music is balm to my heart! How glad I should be if his majesty could look in and bless his brave defenders!"

My heart leaped with joy at her words. "If he only could!" I exclaimed under my breath.

Then one of the king's gentlemen spoke.

"It would do your majesty good," he said, "to look upon those men, who are pledging their king."

"Let us go, sire," said the queen, rising quickly from the table, while her face broke into smiles.

His majesty gave himself a little shake, and slowly rose to do *her* pleasure. It was simply this, I think, and not that he had any pleasure of his own in going. I thank the blessed saints that I have not such a husband!

And if I say that, who am not Marie Antoinette, daughter of Marie Thérèse, of royal soul, and descendant of the Cæsars, what must her majesty be thinking? Or does the miracle of love render blind even such eyes as hers?

As we entered the boxes, and a flood of light broke over us, a tumultuous shout arose from all that company. Cries of "Vive la reine!" and "Vive le roi!" made the very roof resound and ring again. Hats were thrown into the air, and strong men broke into tears. It was always her majesty's name which was dwelt upon the longest, and which sent that loyal



company into a fever of exultation. For the Halle de l'Opéra was full of brave men, not of *canaille* who hated the "Austrian." She was their inspiration, this gracious, sorrowful woman, who walked among them with the dauphin in her arms, smiling through her tears. My soul grew so absorbed in her that I forgot for the moment my own separate existence; and when all the world, in a delirium of joy, crowded to kiss her hand, and the band, also in a frenzy of delirium, played the air, "O Richard, O mon roi, le monde t'abandonne," I burst into a passion of tears and sobbed aloud. And so, being not myself, I have but dim remembrance of my own rash deeds. I do remember this—that we, the queen's ladies, tore off the white ribbons from our robes, and tied them into white cockades, which we went about pinning to gold-braided uniforms over gallant hearts. If my fingers were kissed now and again in the pinning, I was by far too much exalted to take offence at such a breach of courtesy. Even the kissing of my lips could scarcely have angered me against such gallant gentlemen. I do remember also that the nation was hissed with scorn, and that the tri-coloured badge was trampled under foot.

It was all over at last, and their majesties were borne away in triumph. As I passed out on the terrace for a breath of fresher air, to cool the fever in my veins, I came face to face with M. d'Arblay. He had gone with us into the Halle de l'Opéra, yet I made note that he was not over-joyful. Indeed, I had been much displeased at times by a look of real disdain which I marked upon his face; and therefore I told him very plainly that to my mind the man who did not feel with his king at such a time as this, could not be unshaken in loyalty at any time whatever.

"All men must feel for the king," he answered evasively; "the cause of the king and the cause of the nation are one."

"How can *that* be," I asked him scornfully, "when the nation rebels against its king?"



"When the king allows the colours of the nation to be trampled upon, as he did to-night, he shows himself to be the enemy of his people," he answered shortly; "he justifies rebellion."

"How can you speak in such measured words," I asked him, "after such a glorious hour?"

"The glory is almost over now," he answered, "and the reckoning is to come."

"I thought, at least, that your sense of chivalry would have led you to be loyal to your *queen*," I went on without heeding him.

"What a soft voice it is!" he cried, "and what bitter words! Why, *many* women are queens in times like these. Any woman who can sway the hearts of the men about her is a queen. I know of one glorious woman in Paris who is growing more and more a queen—'an astonishing woman,' as some one else has called her."

"Pray, who is this queen of yours who reigns in Paris, monsieur?" I asked him curiously. "I cannot fancy how any *astonishing* woman can be a delightful one. And is it at the shrine of this goddess that you render your faithless allegiance, Monsieur d'Arblay?"

"I do not render homage to any woman but one," he answered, growing flushed and irritated; "and you know well who is *my* queen."

"Your heart is too disloyal to be faithful to *any* queen," said I. "If any woman has a throne there, I do not know her, Monsieur d'Arblay."

"You know her well," he answered, seizing my hands in a passion, "and you know all the counsels of her heart—to which, God knows, she is never for a moment true."

"Monsieur," I answered indignantly, "I know you are the friend of Monsieur de Lafayette, as I have been well assured. As to *my* heart, it is never *counselled* to have friendship with traitors."



But because I felt some sorrow for his trouble, I could not make my words so bitter as I should. They had a softer sound than I meant, perhaps, or M. d'Arblay must have been suddenly forsaken of his reason; for he cut them short by catching me in his arms and pressing me to his breast. I strove vainly to free myself from such a strange position, until, hearing the step of a sentry close beside us, M. d'Arblay released me, and stood silent, gazing at me with folded arms.

"Monsieur," I said, and my voice trembled with anger, "I have long mistrusted your loyalty to the king, but never until to-night have I doubted that you were an honourable gentleman."

He made no answer, and indeed I did not tarry until he should think of one. As I ran by him and turned into the lighted avenue I came face to face with the sentry who had passed us. It was Henri Beaupré.

Perhaps, even without my knowledge, there was an appeal for succour in my eyes, for my heart was ready to break with very indignation. I had none near me to whom the care of my good name in any wise belonged, not even M. de Nesle, and I felt by instinct that here was one who cared. His face told me as much, though his eyes were filled with astonishment. My heart beat so quickly that I leaned for one moment against a tree, to catch my breath; and it came with a sob.

Then he must have understood; his face flushed, and his eyes darted an angry light back into the darkness where I had left M. d'Arblay. And though it seemed a strangely foolish thing that I should care what this common fellow thought of me, yet I really cared so much that I lingered a moment, letting him see the trouble in my eyes.

"Lady Marguerite," he said, "speak if you have any service for me."

He had grown pale, and stood like a statue; but his eyes flashed, and though his words were calm, there was a depth of indignation in them.



"There is nothing," I said, "that you can do ; don't think of doing anything. But if I ever should have need of help, I will remember."

Then he raised the hand which I gave him to his lips, and said, "God bless you."

I hope God will. I have a curious desire that I too had Manon's faith, and could carry my troubles directly to the Lord. It might be more helpful than sending a message even by the blessed Mother. That is a sinful thought, which needs confessing ; but the good *abbé* is very kind.

And, after all, there is some comfort in feeling that one is betrothed. M. de Nesle will at least, I should think, know how to look after his own. As to M. d'Arblay, why, I begin to think that loyalty of heart is worth far more than length of lineage after all.

October 3.

It seems there has been much commotion among the people on account of that dinner in the Halle de l'Opéra. The king may not even receive the homage of his friends but a mob of Parisian *canaille* must come to inquire about it. It is my mind that St. Antoine begins to rule the king far more than ever the king ruled France ; but surely, being a woman, my mind is of little moment.

As I write, I have from my window the rebellious city of Paris in my very sight ; and that is not so strange as it might seem. Since Gabrielle was appointed to the household of the Princess Elizabeth, some three weeks ago, I have really been very melancholy. And seeing this, her majesty urged me to spend a few days in Gabrielle's company. I was a little fearful of leaving the palace, to approach this tumultuous city ; but my courage waxed when the queen had laughed at my fears.

"They will not hurt you, *mon enfant*," she said ; "they have other matters to consider, these good people, and truly they mean no harm."



But if I was reassured, it was not because I believed in the good-will of those *canaille*, but rather because I knew they would not be likely to chase after such silly game as I. In fact, my journey was made in perfect safety, and only one thing occurred to trouble me. At the turning of the great avenue, when I had but just started, with Annette and one valet to attend me, M. d'Arblay rode up on horseback and took the liberty of stopping my coach.

As he had begged my pardon that very morning for the insult he had offered me, I could not choose but listen in patience to what he had to say. He begged that I would abandon my idea of travelling alone at such a time, and wondered most irreverently of what her majesty was thinking to allow me to start. Whereupon I told him that it was sufficient proof of the prudence of my going that her majesty *had* allowed it ; and I marvelled that such a patriot as he should allow himself to mistrust the amiable people of Paris. M. d'Arblay frowned at my words, and then begged to be allowed at least to protect me. And although I at first refused, yet the man has such an air of decision, and is so bent upon having his will, that rather than create a scene on the public avenue, I finally agreed that he should sit beside me. I will admit that he behaved discreetly. Annette being present, how could he do otherwise ?

For although Annette feigned to be asleep, without doubt M. d'Arblay knew that such sleep as hers could not be over-trusted. For myself, I am beginning to be mistrustful of all hirelings, except, perhaps, a few like the king's most excellent Cléry. Treason may be hatched in the very palace, and no one be the wiser. It was only a few days ago that I caught Annette humming the air of some new song which they call "*Ça ira*," and which all the *canaille* sing. When I reproved her, she coloured slightly and cast down her eyes. She was not thinking of the words, she said, but of the tune, which was a merry one, and went well. And yet I have trusted Annette with all my heart.



However, as I had nothing to say to M. d'Arblay which all the world might not hear, the presence of Annette was no burden but a solace to me. We chatted indifferently upon the weather, the trees, the flowers—upon every topic, and they were few, which had no meaning. We drove quickly, and I was hoping we should soon have finished, when something occurred which took my courage away. As we passed a group of people, a man with unkempt hair suddenly caught sight of my face and shot an angry glance within the carriage. When he proceeded still further to shake his fist at me, I remembered in the flash of a second that I had seen the man before. M. d'Arblay noticed him, but, the blessed saints be praised! we passed so quickly that he had no time to do more than dart a sudden glance from the group to me, and back again, before we were far beyond them. His brow darkened, but he asked no questions, for which I thanked the presence of Annette. Her eyes seemed closed—perhaps she slept; yet, in good sooth, I have grown so mistrustful that I almost doubted it.

I thought M. d'Arblay would have no opportunity to question me; but presently Annette became distressed with thirst, and asked demurely if she might not descend from the carriage to drink, and also to fetch some water for madame. As it seemed wiser to consent, I let her alight at a certain small house which we were passing. And this was monsieur's opportunity, which he was not slow in seizing.

"Mademoiselle," he asked hastily, the moment Annette had vanished, "did you ever see that man before?"

"Which man?" I asked composedly; "we pass so many men that you are quite indefinite, Monsieur d'Arblay."

"You know very well," he answered, "for I saw you shudder and turn white with fear."

"Yes, I know," I answered, with all the dignity that I had power to command—"that fellow in the rusty gray coat; I have seen him once or twice."

"Will you tell me," he asked imperatively, "as quickly as



you can, what he has against you? I ask for your own safety; answer truly."

"I always answer truly, when I answer at all, monsieur," I replied.

At this he grew pale, and I caught a smothered oath upon his lips, which, as M. d'Arblay is not prone to swearing, struck me with surprise.

"My life and all that I have are yours, Marguerite," he entreated eagerly; "tell me."

And I was about to say that he had no cause to doubt this man, who was only one of the suffering people whom he loved so tenderly—for I was more angry at M. d'Arblay than in fear of the creature who threatened me—but Annette returning took the words from my lips. And though I am sure M. d'Arblay had much more to say, I am equally sure that it was all the better left unsaid, for whatever he does or says is sure to give me pain.

I said I had no opportunity to reply, but *silently* I did. I pointed, while Annette was entering the carriage, to M. de Neale's betrothal ring, which shone brightly on my finger; and I think my answer was clear to him, for he grew suddenly paler than before, and threw an angry glance, first at the ring and then at me, but that was all.

So here I am in very sight of Paris; and yet in such a home as this I do not wonder to find Gabrielle content. When the princess herself is by it is like a little heaven, for her saintliness pervades everything, like some sweet, penetrating odour. I never saw a holier life, or one which speaks more strongly day by day for the truth of our blessed religion. If such as she, whose life is a prayer, need saints and angels to intercede for them in heaven, how can we, who are sinful and unholy, approach the blessed Lord without them?

Gabrielle says the household here is like a holy sisterhood—only that none have taken vows—and the sweet Ste. Elizabeth is like a mother-abbess, going in and out with smiles like ben-



sons. They live a life of prayer and alms-deeds; and when the princess is at Versailles, they never think of doing what she would disapprove. It might almost make holy even such a worldling as I to live my life in such an atmosphere; only, as far as I can see, it is rather love for the dear princess than love for the Lord which controls this gentle sisterhood. The question would always arise with me, whether such deeds which are prompted by an earthly love would be acceptable in heaven. It would not be worth while to give up all the world, and all its dear delights, unless one were quite sure of pleasing God. That would be giving all and having nothing in return.

For my own part, although I delight to be with Gabrielle, I could not wish to stay long from Versailles. And I am afraid one word or smile from my queen is worth more to me than even the blessing of the holy Mother herself. May God forgive me for having such a sinful, worldly heart!



#### XIV.

##### *PARIS COMES TO VERSAILLES.*

IT was six o'clock on a fair October morning, and the first customer of the day had just stepped in for a bundle of leeks while Mère Gascoigne was still at her breakfast. Having purchased her leeks, the good woman had paused to unburden her mind. What was it that was doing in the palace over-night?—lights burning until all hours of the morning; disgraceful rioting such as would have made St. Antoine itself blush for shame! One might swear the whole court had been over-drinking, and had flung out the noise of their unrighteous revelry into the still night air to disturb the dreams of quiet sober folk. Who could sit and eat evil bread while such deeds of death were doing?

To all this Mère Gascoigne listened with frowning brows and nods of disapproval. Then leaving her change loose upon the counter, she had rushed from her little shop without pausing to fasten the door, her hair still unkempt and her stomach still unfilled.

Versailles was already astir, with even more vigorous life than that of other days. Knots of people were gathered here and there, whose eager gestures betrayed some unwonted cause of trouble. Mère Gascoigne stood for a moment, shading her eyes with her hand and looking toward the nearest of these groups; but while she looked, old André Beaupré flung open his own front door.



"Good morning, neighbour," he said. "I vow it must be an ill wind to blow thee about the town so early in the day."

"Ay, you may well say that," she answered, mounting the steps and marching past him into the little sitting-room, where Manon was laying upon the table a breakfast of black bread and poor coffee. "It's more often an *ill* wind than any other which blows upon us now."

Manon paused with lips apart and eager eyes to listen, while her father drew up another chair. "Sit down and breakfast with us, neighbour," he said, "while you unburden your heart."

"I'll take no breakfast," she answered harshly. "I am weary of black bread. I'd like to feed a bit of it to Madame Veto over yonder."

André Beupré nodded his head; and she continued eagerly, holding by the back of the chair, "I knew no good could come of all the merry uniforms. Foreign folk are never to my liking. Be they Swiss or be they Flemish, it's all the same. When a king needs outsiders to protect him from his own, it's time he went over the frontier altogether."

"Tell us, Mère Gascoigne!" cried Manon. "We have heard nothing yet."

"Ay, let us hear the story," said her father. "Tell us what you have to say."

"I have to say," she exclaimed, "that there were such disgraceful orgies last night in the palace as were fit for a heathen country! The whole court drunken together for all that I can hear; and those wretched beasts from Flanders treading the nation's colours under foot—*les scélérats*! They even raised their croaking tongues to hiss at the blessed nation. Some worthy people who were present in the galleries can tell us it is true."

Old Beupré began to swear, while the tears gathered in Manon's eyes.

"Now it's quite plain," quoth Mère Gascoigne, "what the Flanders regiment came for. To protect the peace, indeed!"



André Beaupré clenched his fists. "It will be all the worse for themselves," he said.

"But that's not all!" cried Mère Gascoigne in her shrill treble. "In the midst of these disgraceful deeds their majesties themselves appeared to smile upon those cowards. And the money that was spent in wines and viands, I warrant me, would feed all Versailles for a week."

"Little they care for feeding Versailles," growled her auditor, waxing more and more indignant.

"If we once could get at the king," wailed Mère Gascoigne. "His majesty wishes us no harm; it's the evil counsellors who hedge him about."

And over all of this and much more Mère Gascoigne pondered during that day and the next, talking and listening while she weighed her groceries. Everything grows by being dwelt upon, and this dinner of the body-guards, bringing so many things to remembrance, would grow to be a very feast of demons presently. Every time one ate a morsel of bread, and felt that it was *but* a morsel, and very poor at that, one was reminded that hunger stared him in the face, and yet that somewhere else there was feasting. Every time one looked from a window off in the distance one could discern the hated green uniform, with its brilliant facings, standing guard in the place of the nation. Any time that one only walked in the streets one might come breast to breast with some aristocrat wearing a mysterious black cockade on his coat, or at the very best with a white one. And what was meant by those black cockades? Were they like the black flag of piratical warfare, a menace of blood and no quarter? What could such a colour mean but death to patriot France?

Now Mère Gascoigne was a hot-tempered woman, and never given to self-control. She was like a well-built barque cruising without a helmsman. She had faith in humanity; all other faith was less than nothing to her. She laughed at the saints who had once had her prayers, and had ceased to answer them.



To her, God was no Father ; and if religion was nothing more than she had found it, she was content to let it alone.

If she could have found the way to God through the one great Sacrifice, being what she was she might have become in her small measure like St. Paul himself when God turned him about and set him on a different course. For if Mère Gascoigne knew how to hate, she also knew how to love. She loved her country, and the people who, like herself, were ground and starved ; and she hated the queen and the court. The love was as powerful as the hatred, but no stronger.

The same water which floods the land with ruin will, when guided rightly, clothe barren fields with verdure. The same power of hating which ruins and devastates and works unspeakable woe when wreaked upon the sinner, might purify and overcome the world if turned toward the sin itself.

But neighbour Gascoigne continued her musing, and while she mused "the fire burned."

She had a sister in Paris whose husband had had no work for many days—no work, except perhaps *public* work, as one may say, such as overturning Bastilles, or the general bearing of the Tricolor and pike. Yet her sister had five small mouths to fill besides her own. Neighbour Gascoigne resolved to discover how it was faring now with those five hungry mouths in Paris. And so one morning she climbed into the old stage which ran back and forth between the city and Versailles. The roads were full of people, and the stage was full of passengers. All the world seemed merry enough, when one remembered how many were starving ; and as one came near the city the streets were so thronged that all Paris seemed driven out of doors. Just at the turning of a corner on the Rue St. Honoré, they came upon a crowd of clamorous people whom the half-hearted patrol-men were trying in vain to quiet. The stage could go no further, and proceeded to drop its passengers. But this made little odds to Mère Gascoigne, to whom the very dust of the great city was dear. Being in no haste, she



stood gazing with interest to learn the cause of so great a tumult. In the midst of the crowd was a group of royalists wearing the black cockades—carrying them proudly, as it were, and in defiance of popular anger. The people—grown suddenly into *le peuple souverain*—brooked neither pride nor defiance, and the sight of these mysterious symbols had driven them to fury. “À bas!” was the universal shriek—“à bas les cocardes noires!” and some of the ringleaders, seizing each a cockade, dashed them with savage oaths to the ground, where they were trampled by the feet of the multitude.

In the face of such angry threats, however, one of these gaily-dressed courtiers, a young fellow with the down just shading his lip, rescued from the dust his own dishonoured symbol, kissed it reverently, and tried to fasten it again upon his bosom. In vain. A dozen hands seized and prevented him, while shrieks of angry laughter rose from the encircling throng. Mère Gascoigne also laughed; she liked his pluck, but she liked his failure better.

She found her sister with not a morsel in her cupboard, but with the five little ones begging for food; and these she proceeded to feed with a black loaf which she had purchased by the way. “We shall all die,” said her sister, sitting with her hands folded, and watching Mère Gascoigne feed the children. She was a quiet woman always; but there was a look this day in her eyes which startled Mère Gascoigne, making her think that it might be nearer than she fancied, this death by hunger.

She looked at the pinched faces of the little children—which gleamed like ghostly faces in a land of shadows—at their large hollow eyes and sunken cheeks, and then she groaned. “Jeanne,” she said suddenly, “it is time that something was done.” And with the words still upon her lips she turned and walked away.

Whatever her purpose may have been, even to her own mind it was but dimly outlined. She walked on as one in a



dream, and had no thought of weariness. The streets were fuller than ever, for Saturday night was market-night and all the world was abroad, even though there was no money with which to buy and no fit food to be purchased at any cost. So great was the scarcity in those October days, that there were some in the city that Saturday night who for thirty hours had not tasted a morsel of food. And without doubt, all those idle fellows who were standing at street corners to pull off black cockades and curse aristocrats had hungry wives at home, and little children, who were none the better for the cursing.

And Mère Gascoigne said to herself as she looked at them, "Can they do nothing better in the world than cackle?"

"Were none of them men enough to *do*?" she wondered. "When men can do naught but cackle, it is time surely that women began to crow."

So her thoughts formed themselves. Off in the palace at Versailles there was food to spare. Was there no way which the wisdom of *men* could devise to bring these and that together—hungry mouths to an overplus of food? Or if not, then what might *womanly* wisdom do to compass it?

As she reached this point in her soliloquy, threading her way as best she might through the muddy streets, amidst the thronging people and the dashing cabriolets, she came to the Palais Royal, and strolled along to the Café de Foi, where a few months before Camille Desmoulins had distributed his green cockades. Here a sudden impulse seized her. She had not seen Camille on that eventful day, but she bore in mind what the issue of his speaking had been. Might not she also, although a woman, meet with the same success? Again there came before her vision the white faces she had seen that afternoon, and her heart throbbed with indignation. Plenty in the palace, while the people starved!

Mère Gascoigne, fired with a sudden impulse, mounted a table then and waved her arms. All eyes were drawn toward



her. Whatever she had to say her pinched and hollow features would emphasize her words. They were hard features at best, and bore the marks of toil and poverty; and her garments were of coarse home-spun. Yet there was a heroism in her face, a mother-instinct speaking through her eyes, which drew the hearts of other mothers in cordial sympathy. "Why do you do naught but gabble about your liberties, my brothers," she cried, "while your wives and children starve? You have men's arms and voices; if you have also the hearts of men, see to it that you feed them quickly, before it is too late. There is bread in plenty for aristocrats—bread even for the dog of an aristocrat—bread to be thrown away. And you let your children die at the breasts of your wives, and die yourselves of hunger!" Her voice shrilled like a trumpet, and the people paused to hear it. "Oh that women had men's arms!" she cried; "then would we compel the Assembly to feed our children, or force the palace for food. *Have* you men's arms? or are you cowards, all of you, in the sight of Heaven this day?"

And while some cried, laughing, "Vive les femmes!" others, with grim faces and angry brows, cried with curses, "*À bas les aristocrates!*"—the bread-eaters.

Neighbour Gascoigne, coming down from her table with heart on fire, was embraced by weeping women who sobbed her praises. Even the patrol-men, watching in sullen silence for the outcome of the matter, let her pass on unproved. They also were men with wives, perhaps, and children.

On the Sabbath morning after these things occurred, Annette appeared suddenly at her uncle's house, just as Henri, who was off guard at that hour, was returning with Manon from morning service.

"I did not suppose," cried Annette, embracing her uncle, "that any one thought of church to-day; all Paris is abroad."

"Paris is always abroad," said Henri carelessly. "And does the Lady Marguerite serve *herself* on Sabbath days, *cousine*?"



He spoke lightly, and yet, to Manon's ear, there was an undertone of tenderness when he spoke the name that was dearest to him.

"My lady has ample service," said Annette, tossing her head. "She has need of *three* maids at least, for *one* could never please her. I longed to tell you of all the strange doings at the palace, for I make sure that Henri will tell you nothing."

"Sit thee down, Annette, and tell us all thou knowest," said old Beaupré, rubbing his hands together. "It is good to see thy face once more and hear thy voice."

Annette seated herself at his feet; but Henri stood leaning cap in hand, against the door. All that Annette had to tell he also had seen, had even keenly regretted, although he had not mentioned it. And after all, the most vivid recollection which he carried of the last few days was of Marguerite's eyes when they appealed to him, and the touch of her hand in his. He paid little heed to Annette's words, until, as he was about to turn away, she spoke of a certain ride, when M. d'Arblay had gone to protect her lady. "I cannot say if she were pleased or no," said Annette, laughing merrily, "but *sans doute* monsieur was pleased enough for both."

"Annette," said Henri sharply, "you should keep your lady's secrets while you serve her."

Annette coloured deeply, and flashed a glance of indignant reproach at her cousin. "My lady is right dear to me," she said; "but I am not sworn her protector. I do my duty; what can woman more? I even feigned to be asleep, that my lord might speak his heart softly if he chose; and through my closed lids I saw something which pained me. A man by the roadside, who seemed to hate my lady—ah, blessed Saint Gabriel, how he must hate her! No, no; I will not tell. I must keep my lady's secrets. But trust me, Henri, I will find out why he hates her so—or die for it. Why, how white you have grown! And you look as angry as though you too would like



to know. If it is aught to you—which, of course, it cannot be—why were you not at hand when that *scélérat* shook his fist at my lady?”

Henri strode toward her, and stood looking down with folded arms. “Annette,” he said, “tell me at once, who was that man?”

His tone was one which would not be gainsaid nor brook a falsehood.

Annette looked up with a smile. “Dear Henri,” she said, “thank you. For I am sure, since you do not know my lady, it must be for my sake that you feel so anxious for her safety. I never saw the man before; how could I tell his name?”

Henri still looked at her, with dark suspicion in his eyes.

“Son Henri, what concern can it be of yours,” said his father shortly, “that an aristocrat has one more hater? I hate them all myself from the bottom of my heart, and I trow I could shake my fist at every one of them. *Vive la nation* and à bas les aristocrates—all of them!”

“*Vive l’honneur* always,” said Henri passionately, “and down with treachery and cowardice!”

Saying which he turned on his heel and went out alone into the soft October weather. His heart was seething with passions which surely were not born of the sermon or prayers of the morning. Indignation and a hopeless love held the mastery over him—a love which was only a vision, a shadow of a dream, and yet which filled his life with its glory, and seemed sometimes the one real thing in the midst of shadows rather than a shadow itself.

And his anger, though just enough, had mastered *him* so completely that, like a strong man and a good soldier, he felt the need of conquering it in turn. He had been used to fighting spiritual battles and overcoming hidden enemies. He knew no man can be strong of arm who is not strong of spirit; that no man can overcome the world who is not by God’s grace conqueror of himself. The strength of his manhood lay in this, and his ignorance of fear—God in *him*, fighting with and



for him. There was no need of fear, since death was gain—gain more than all, perhaps, if his life was to be a disappointment and a sorrow.

All that day, while Henri fought the foes within his heart, Mère Gascoigne was exulting over the speech which she had made. She slept soundly at her sister's that Sabbath night, and did not waken until after six o'clock; but even then the light of the chill October morning had scarcely dawned. The sky was leaden, the wind whistled shrilly down the chimney, and the rain pattered on the eaves. Mère Gascoigne rubbed her eyes; she wanted to start betimes for Versailles, that she might not miss too many customers.

That was her first thought, and upon that she began to hear strange noises in the street below. Rising quickly and throwing open the window, she caught the rolling of a distant drum, the nearer sound of eager feet, and voices pitched in a shrill and piercing key which filled the air with dissonance. A crowd of tumultuous women met her sight pouring from avenues and byways with shouts and curses and cries. The issue of a speech such as that of Mère Gascoigne's was action such as this.

Mère Gascoigne did not wait to be pressed. She threw on her home-spun dress and woollen shawl, set her cap somewhat awry upon her head, and joined that rushing flood of woman-kind who went in search of bread.



XV.

MARGUERITE'S ADVENTURE.

October 1789.

WE are in Paris, hideous Paris, with its ill-savoured streets and noisy crowds, where the air is full of treachery. I do not love the king's good city of Paris, nor the Tuileries where *le peuple souverain* are pleased that his majesty should dwell. It is haunted with ghosts and memories. It is old and musty, and smells of decay; the very tapestries have stories to tell. It is too near the Louvre, where that boy-king fired his signal-shot for the St. Bartholomew. Are we also being drawn to the verge of some terrible scene like that—some mighty retribution? Our coming here seems like a foreboding of vengeance.

The dauphin, with the quickness of a sensitive child, has taken note of all. "*Maman*," he said the other day, "everything here is very ugly."

"My son," said her majesty, "Louis XIV. lived here and was satisfied; we must not be more difficult than he."\*

Her words are gentle; she makes no complaint; but her face is fast growing to accord with the gloom of this ancient palace. Truly, although I myself have been at the very gates of death, and the memory of my terror is always present in my dreams, yet my heart is less afflicted for my own sorrows than for those of her gracious majesty.

The Saturday evening upon which I wrote last I spent

\* Weber.



happily with Gabrielle—my sole misadventure thus far being that Annette had been suddenly called to Versailles on account of the illness of her cousin Manon.

On Sunday we heard reports of a tumult in the city, which so greatly alarmed me that I thought it a happy chance that my father's old friend, M. d'Argenson, who resided on his estate near St. Germain, should have been driving home along the avenue while Gabrielle and I were walking in the gardens. For no sooner had he seen me than he alighted from his carriage, and when I had told him my story he declared that it would be very unsafe for me to remain where I was, and that, being my father's old friend, he should take the liberty of carrying me home with him. Of course, I ventured to protest. I could not bear to leave Gabrielle in peril, and moreover I must not fail to be at the palace on Monday morning. But M. d'Argenson left me no choice; for he agreed to send me home in his own carriage, and with a trusty servant, which he could easily do, as his estate is but six or eight miles from Versailles. But when he begged that Gabrielle would also come, she answered laughing that it would take more than a noisy rabble like that to frighten her away from her post.

I wonder, is Gabrielle more brave than I? or was it rather the feeling that I was *not* at my post, and the desire to be with her majesty if trouble came, which urged me back toward Versailles?

I had a delightful evening with the family of M. d'Argenson, and should have started early on Monday morning to return to the château. But I had endless delays in setting off, as everything went ill for the lack of Annette's nimble fingers. And therefore it could not be counted morning when I started, but rather well past noon. An ancient maid of Madame d'Argenson's travelled with me; but the driver upon whom my host had depended was taken suddenly ill, and his place had to be supplied as best it might and at the last moment. I did not at all like the face of this man who was so hastily summoned, and



the valet who rode beside him was scarcely more than a boy. I had such haunting sense of danger that I think I should even have rejoiced in the society of M. d'Arblay as we began leisurely rolling toward Versailles.

The rain had been falling in torrents, which was also one reason for our delay. M. d'Argenson was very loath to have me leave in such inclement weather, while I was equally determined that I would not on any account break my word with her majesty. The roads were muddy, and the horses had to pick their way as best they might; but the air which came through the open window of the carriage was sweet with fresh country odours, and as everything in nature gives one hope, I began to throw off my troubles. I even thought, as I leaned back in the carriage, that perhaps there was more cause for contentment than one might think. And as the journey was very tedious, and my fears had time to vanish, so my lightness of heart began slowly to return. I think it must have been between three and four o'clock when we drew near to Versailles. But for some time before this it had seemed to me that I noticed an unusual murmuring in the air, which reached my ear even above the wailing of the wind and the dismal patter of the rain.

As we drew nearer, it seemed like the far-off shouting of a multitude. But whether it were in joy or anger, or even whether it were a multitude at all, I could not be fully satisfied for the distance which lay between.

"Hark!" I said to the ancient waiting-maid, forgetting that she was a little deaf; "what is it?"

We had not spoken a word to each other before since the carriage started, and she had been almost asleep in her corner until my question aroused her.

She put her head from the window then and listened.

"One can see naught, mademoiselle," she replied. "It must be the wind through the trees of the avenue that mademoiselle hears."



I laughed scornfully. "We are half a league from Versailles yet," I said. "It is something louder than the wind."

We looked at each other for a few moments, while the carriage went slowly on. The sounds seemed more and more to collect and shape themselves. They were wild and shrill like a storm-wind, but louder than any tempest, and more terrible.

"Mademoiselle," said the driver, after what seemed an hour, and as he bent over to speak to me he reined up his horses, "I can see down the avenue that there is some commotion at the palace. Will mademoiselle turn back or go forward?"

I was about to say, "Turn back," when I remembered her majesty, who is dearer to me than all the world, and the proud blood which ran in my own veins also—blood which had never chilled at the thought of danger.

"Drive forward," I answered, with much decision of tone, however the heart were lacking. And again we rolled along.

I could see little from the carriage window at first, but presently, and right suddenly too, we came into the midst of a throng of people. The cries and the tumult, above all the savage faces about us, set my heart to beating wildly. My poor waiting-maid was white with terror, and her teeth began to chatter. Alas for the comedy of it! they chattered so that the upper row fell from her mouth into her lap, and she never noticed it. In spite of my alarm, I had to laugh; I could have cried as easily.

The carriage went so slowly we scarcely moved, while as far as I could see there were only crowds upon crowds of *women* between us and the château and on again towards Paris. Such wretched, lost-looking women I had never seen before. Wild eyes glared at me through the carriage windows, like the eyes of hungry wolves. Ah, *mon Dieu!* it was not *I* who had made them hungry. Some of them had even little children in their arms, and with one hand about the babe they would clench the other and thrust it in my face. All my courage



deserted me—my heart grew cowardly and craven ; though I tried to maintain a brave composure, I knew that the effort would not avail me. Then I put my head from the window, and told the coachman that I saw we must go back.

"It is too late, mademoiselle," he said with an insolent air ; "you should have told me that before. We can neither go forward nor back."

Whereupon he looked at the valet, and I saw them laugh together.

"We can go no further," he repeated, "unless we drive over the people."

I was so indignant at his manner that my courage suddenly returned. I was about to demand that he should force a way, when two or three terrible *poissardes* approached and threw open my carriage door.

"Mademoiselle shall descend in her slippers," they cried, "and walk with us. We are going to the king to ask for bread."

The crowd laughed in wild applause as I descended from my carriage, and glared upon me with cruel mockery in their eyes. I was powerless to do or to forbear ; and when there is no alternative, one must needs be brave.

I saw then that we were but a stone's-throw from the palace court, and that the crowd, far off down the avenue and up to the very palace doors, was surging like the waves of the sea.

We were borne along by the rabble. The soft mud rose above my ankles ; the rain poured pitilessly on my head ; the air about me reeked with unclean odours. Every moment seemed an hour, and I could not even see which way the crowd was bearing me.

So near the doors of the château, so near the brave body-guard and loyal Flandre, would no one see and rescue me for the sake of the queen ?

A rough fellow at my elbow cried out jeeringly, "Those plumes won't answer for the next feast at the Halle de l'Opéra."



my fine lady." He had been jostling me rudely for some time past, and had been reviling her majesty in language to which I had vainly tried to close my ears.

"There'll be no more revelries here," said another ; "we are going to carry the revellers to Paris."

It was very strange that through all my fright and faintness I saw and heard so much.

One bold, evil-looking woman sat mounted on a cannon waving to the crowd to follow her. She was too young to have so hard a face. I heard the wretched men about me praise her beauty. I heard fearful words, language such as might be spoken in the lowest hell. If our spotless Lady Mother would but blot those words from my memory, I would gladly suffer all the other horrors of that day again.

The National Guard looked sullen and defiant, half-pleased, I thought, at all the mischief which was doing. I even saw one or two of them laugh when the women reviled the queen. "Where is that cursed cat?" they would cry ; "let us get at her, and we will eat her heart."

All those who were nearest to me heaped insults upon me. Men laughed in my face, and one brawny fellow with horrible eyes put his arm about me and stooping tried to kiss me. I struck my hand against his face with a sharp cry, in which all my indignation and despair burst forth. I myself was startled at the sound I made in the midst of so much tumult.

I was almost on the palace steps, I might have been in haven in a moment more. Surely I might ; for looking up from the touch of that wretched man, I saw Henri Beaupré just above me, with some five or six men about him trying to keep back the crowd. His eyes met mine as I looked up, and they flashed with righteous anger ; but ah, *mon Dieu* ! what a road lay yet between us !

But at my cry all the women near me sprang upon me like a band of furies.

"*Voilà une aristocrate !*" cried a voice close at my ear—a harsh



voice, like the grating of rusty hinges on a prison door ; " behold a queen's friend ! "

" See her fine jewels ! " cried another voice, a woman's, shrill and loud, " and her soft skin ! How well she fares on palace dainties ! She cannot bear a touch from one of the people. "

" Hang her up with her garters, " they cried, " and let the Austrian weep for her ! "

In very truth they meant the words they said. I seemed suddenly grasped on every side, as though a hundred hands laid hold of me ; and I heard loud voices in my ears, which sunk into low mutterings and died away. The crowd swam about me, and slowly vanished like a weird nightmare. It seemed an hour, it may have been a moment possibly, when I heard a voice distinct above the others, " Stand back ! " It was the voice of a friend, a sound that I had heard before. Then came a loud clatter of muskets, but no firing—a scattering and falling off around me ; and when, with a little shudder, I opened my eyes, the crowd had parted, pushed back by the arms and muskets of one or two strong men, and Henri Beaupré had lifted me from the ground and was carrying me up the steps. My consciousness was very dim, my terror very great ; but I think I shall always remember his face at that moment when he looked into mine.

As I entered, or rather was passed through the entrance by the guards, I glanced back with a shudder, and saw that the crowd were turning upon him like ravenous wild beasts, and that he stood up with a brave front, and his arms folded, and dared them.

" Do your worst ! " he cried. " Am I not a citizen and hungry also like you ? Shall we not only murder helpless women, but each other too ? "

" Hasten, madame ! " said the guards, seeing me linger, " do not tarry, or they will force an entrance in a moment. "

Within the palace there were weeping women everywhere, and terror and confusion upon every face. I hastened at once



to her majesty, and notwithstanding her own distress, she fervently thanked God for my deliverance.

The light was already growing dim, for the October days were shortening fast, and the sky hung heavily with clouds. Some women had been admitted into the palace, as Madame Fleurange told me, and were at that moment telling their desires to the king.

"It were well that his majesty should listen, and send them speedily away," she said. "One might *fire*, to be sure; but after all it is ill firing upon *women*, and, besides, the National Guard might look upon the matter with other eyes than we."

Madame Fleurange smiled in saying this, as though she had her own sentiments in regard to the whole affair.

"Still," I said defiantly, "there are always the Swiss. I would fire for the sake of firing, even if nobody were hit."

Madame laughed. We were standing by a window looking out into the court-yard. The crowd of draggled women still swayed before us, and truly I saw nothing to provoke such laughter. Moreover, I was still so weak that I clung to the window-sill for support, and I had not yet changed my own wet garments. And above all, my heart was filled with fear lest that brave man should have suffered for my sake.

Yet madame *laughed*!

At that very moment some one drew near and stood by my other side. I knew that it was M. d'Arblay, but I did not turn my head.

"Did you come through that terrible crowd, mademoiselle?" he asked, in a voice which trembled a little with emotion. "If you did, it must have been the angel in your face which saved you."

"Monsieur," I answered, without turning my head, "there was nothing angelic in *my face*, be sure of that. But the blessed Sainte Marguerite sent an angel in human form to rescue me from my enemies. And I vow before God that I will never forget him. If he were the lowest of the *canaille*, he should be



to me henceforth a noble knight." I spoke with much feeling, and my voice was far from steady. I had gone through such deep waters that I seemed carried beyond myself.

"I would to God it had been I!" he said in a husky voice. "I would give all that I possess to have been that happy man, Marguerite."

I knew that he was strongly moved, though I kept my face turned from him; but when he asked me to tell him who it was, I steadfastly refused. "*God* knows, and *I* know," I answered, "and that is enough." And then I asked abruptly, "Monsieur d'Arblay, when is this going to end?"

"Lafayette is on the way," he answered, "and he will settle everything."

"Is Lafayette such a hero that he can quiet a raging multitude like that?" I questioned scornfully.

"He shall see," said M. d'Arblay with much complacence. "Meanwhile behold the deputation of women coming out into the court! How glad their faces are! and hear those shouts of '*Vive le roi!*' They are innocent people. They mean the king no harm."

And almost while he spoke, those furies in the crowd fell upon the poor creatures who were bearing the king's message. One of these, the youngest and fairest, they seized with violent hands; and seeing this, and recalling my own terrible danger, I became sick with dread, and ran weeping to the queen's apartments. There I found that the king's trust in his people's love was not so great as that of M. d'Arblay, for carriages were waiting at the back-gate to take away the royal family, and the queen's women were busily packing what was needed for her majesty's comfort. At the sight of this I took fresh courage, and fell to helping them; for it was fast growing dark, and whatever we had to do must truly be done in haste.

I don't quite know how it came to pass that all this packing went for naught, and that hour after hour found their majesties still at Versailles. Some one said there was no cause why the



king should fly from his people ; and some one else, that the carriages could never pass beyond the entrance-gate. Next we heard that they had been seized by the mob, for which there had been ample opportunity allowed. And so as night came on, and every hope seemed failing, we settled down into a sad disquietude.

Meanwhile M. de Lafayette arrived, much heated and out of breath, and hastened to give their majesties what encouragement he might. We all felt reassured by his presence, so much is one often deceived by a bold and confident air. But the authority of M. le Marquis amounted to little, as we proved. The king's good people of Paris still threatened as before, and the night wore slowly on.

I have heard of travellers in Russian snow-fields, surrounded by hordes of ravenous wolves, affrighted by their howling. Now I know of my own self what that was like.

At last her majesty retired to rest. It was toward three o'clock in the morning. She was very weary, and M. de Lafayette had assured her there should be no trouble. For myself, I had far less confidence in M. de Lafayette's promises of peace than I had in the brave guards at the door of the queen's ante-chamber.

In the ante-chamber itself two of the queen's ladies sat watching—Madame Campan and her sister. I crept in and sat with them unforbidden, and we spoke in low whispers, or, when we were not speaking, we listened to the throbbing of each other's hearts.

A continual fascination as of some ghastly horror drew us towards the great windows, though, truly, all had grown quiet at last, as our patriot general had foretold. We could see a sea of faces illumined dimly by torches and the lights on the terrace ; there was a low murmur, only now like waves upon the shore, but the silence seemed more ominous than the shouting.

It was growing towards the morning. We had been nodding in our seats, and the gray dawn was just peeping in at the win-



dows, when we were suddenly aroused by the sound of firing—a shot in the court-yard, close under our windows.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" I cried softly for a prayer. Then we stopped breathing and listened with our lips apart.

There was a sudden movement like the rushing of a multitude without, and as we reached the window some one fell dead before our eyes. The dawn was still gray: one could only tell that a man had fallen, but whether on the one side or the other who could say?

They, the people, pushed and crushed each other from all sides towards the entrance of the château. I felt sure in my heart that some barrier had given way. We looked into each other's faces, but no one spoke. There were sounds of a struggle below, a stirring among the guards without the door.

I gathered up my soul to face the worst, as if the end of all the world had come; and then—Sainte Marguerite be my witness!—I thought only of the queen.

It seemed but a moment while we stood fixed to the spot, when the door of the ante-chamber was flung wide, and some of her majesty's guard, thrusting their heads through the door, shouted, "Save the queen!"

We could hear terrible sounds beyond—the crashing of heavy axes, the ringing of pikes, and the voices of a raging multitude. And we knew that only that one door and the arms of those faithful men stood between her majesty and death, while we who should have acted stood helpless and amazed; and no great marvel.

"Hasten!" cried the guards, in tones of strong excitement; "save the queen!" And even while they spoke, and while Madame Campan sprang forward, the great door was forced; and before we could close and bar the other, I saw the brave Miomandre, the merry-hearted, surrounded by bloody pikes, beating back alone a multitude of furious men. At that moment he turned his head, crying also in ringing tones, "We will die! save the queen—the queen!"



The door of safety closed so heavily—it took so long to bolt and bar it with such trembling fingers; and dear as her majesty's safety was to us all, we could have wept at the thought of shutting those brave men without to certain death.

We flew to her majesty's chamber, bolting and barring all doors which lay between; and while the crashing of axes rang in close pursuit, Madame Campan hastily threw some clothing about the queen, and half carried her to the door of the king's apartment. Then every breath turned itself into a prayer, for, alas! the queen knocked vainly upon that door of hope, and her enemies followed close behind. Would no one hear her pleading? Should we see her transfixed before our eyes upon those terrible pikes, and must the blood of those brave men be shed in vain?

So we wondered with our whole hearts set upon that one desire; and the moments seemed like years, and well they might. One instant longer would have been too late. Even after we were safe in the *cœil de bœuf*, we looked in each other's white faces, doubting if the danger could be past.

While I leaned, faint and trembling, against a window-frame, Madame Fleurange approached me. "Do not be alarmed, my dear," she said. "It was a mistake to fire upon the people—*women*, you know—it made them quite indignant. But they would never have harmed the queen."

Madame seemed to take such a rational view of things, to be so calm and self-possessed, that I was fain to stay myself upon her; and remembering suddenly the fearful threats which I had heard uttered against the guards, I asked her what their fate had been. She smiled when I told her my fears.

"Monsieur de Tardivet rashly exposed himself," she replied, "and used threatening language to the people. Some say he tried to plead with them for the queen's sake, even venturing down the grand stairs to meet them on the way. He died like a brave man, albeit a foolish one, for *one* cannot stand against a hundred."



As she spoke we heard voices without crying, "The king to Paris! the king to Paris!" And what other course indeed remained, since Paris held the château? But, alas! I have no heart to recall the story of that grievous day, which seemed but the doorway to endless misery. The long, hot ride; the slow torture, as we crawled along the avenue, with the hooting mob about us; the steady, queenly bearing of her majesty—ah, sweet Sainte Marguerite!—are always present to my mind. Those wretches pressed close upon our carriage wheels; they shook their fists in our faces; they assaulted the queen with threatenings and oaths; and more than all, they kept the heads of those two murdered guards of her majesty, Deschuttes and Varigny, for ever in her view. The sight was like some living crime which haunts one's conscience and may not be evaded.

But everything this side of heaven ends at last. Yes, even detestable Paris will come to an end some day and be swept from the face of the earth—Paris with its foul streets and crowds of insatiable *canaille*! I loathe the very air of it! Yet I am told that his majesty could say, with what truth I know not, that he came with "pleasure and confidence" to dwell in the midst of his "good people of Paris."

And so, wherever else the people may lead, the court, I doubt not, with "pleasure and confidence" will follow after, and will dance to whatever tune they please to set.

I am giving up all hopes of better things, having only my heart fixed to abide by her majesty. The conduct of Madame de Lamballe should inspire all loyal hearts. In the face of the queen's command, she has hastened to leave her refuge in England and share the sorrows of her friend. She also, like Madame de Polignac, is hated of the people; but she does not share the time-serving spirit of that fleet-footed lady.

The king is no better than a prisoner here in Paris. He may walk in the garden, but always with an escort of grenadiers. Yet, except for the hunting, his majesty seems well content, and keeps an excellent appetite. All that he can do for the people



will never impart to *them* a spirit of contentment. Not even the king's presence in Paris nor the recall of M. Necker. *A propos*, M. d'Arblay, with all his tenderness for the *canaille*, admits that much of our trouble lies at M. Necker's door. There was no real scarcity of grain this year—just an ordinary crop, sufficient for the wants of all. M. Necker, however, has made great hue and cry about the danger of another famine, in order that the people should know how bravely he was working against it—that all the world should admire his foresight. He bought great quantities of grain from other countries, and forbade any to leave our own. Such efforts presuppose great reason; and this has caused a panic, and raised the price of everything which one can eat.

Notwithstanding the sums which M. Necker has spent for grain, and the great quantities of it which have been brought to France, the famine bids fair to be upon us. M. Necker has croaked so much of scarcity that he is the actual maker of it—the cause why grain is hoarded rather than sold to the people.

Well, I always knew that M. Necker was a conceited old hypocrite, and I always disliked his covert witticisms and airs à *le grand seigneur*. Now I am well content to have reason for abusing him.

The little dauphin has been much distressed at the disbanding of the body-guard. He dislikes to see strange soldiers guarding "Papa roi." He asked her majesty the very next day after we arrived where were all the good life-guards? I was present, and heard her answer.

"My son," she said, "the king has no longer any guards but the hearts of his faithful Frenchmen."

Her majesty is very forgiving, to desire to leave such an impression upon the heart of the child. She has other sentiments which lie deeper. If she is forgiving, she is also grateful. When the disbanded life-guards sent a deputation to the Tuileries to offer their devotion, she said to them, with tears in her



eyes, "I will engrave upon the heart of my son the remembrance of your devoted loyalty." And truly I know she will keep her word. The heart of that delightful infant will have much to hold. He will need heavenly wisdom to discern between the evil and the good. Her majesty's hopes are not in the "hearts of the faithful Frenchmen," but in God and the army of the emigrants. There is more of a court at Coblenz now than we have here—a court filled with rage at the insults offered to the king—courtiers who have left the ashes of their burned châteaux and the bones of their murdered kindred behind them.

Ever since that terrible day at Versailles the desire has possessed me to see Henri Beaupré and thank him for his service, which was beyond all thanks. While this wish was present, I thought of him by day and dreamed of him by night. It is not befitting that a *citoyen* soldier, however brave, should always fill one's dreams.

I would not send him a message by Annette, although I could scarcely have told the reason. I disliked to summon him at all, with so many curious eyes on every hand, and had hoped that I might meet him on guard about the palace. It was not until I had begun to challenge myself for pride and ingratitude that I suddenly remembered an elderly man who belongs to the "Filles St. Thomas," and who often guards the door of her majesty's chamber; who is always respectful while others are insolent. I asked him the other day if he knew a man called Henri Beaupré.

"Ah yes, madame," he answered; "I know the *citoyen* Beaupré. He is an excellent fellow."

"He has done me a favour," I replied, "and I would like to thank him."

"If I mistake not, he has indeed done madame a favour," he answered, with due respect—"the very greatest favour, as I saw with my own eyes, being present."

"Then," I continued, not a little surprised that the man



should have presumed to make such strange reflections upon my personal affairs—"then you can well understand that I should like to recompense him."

"Madame," he replied, "a true citizen wishes no recompense for doing his duty. However, I shall inform the citizen Beaupré."

I gave directions that he should be brought to my own boudoir, and I named an hour when Annette would not be with me. And yet, in good truth, never had I found it harder to dismiss Annette than on that very morning which I had named. She was so diligent in my service that my heart smote me for ever having doubted her. And when at length I had fairly sent her away, my nerves were so overwrought that I would gladly have called her back again. The secrecy of my planning seemed to give an unkind meaning to an act of simple courtesy. But something, either my own instinct or the hand of my guardian angel, withheld me from placing any confidence in Annette.

So I received Sergeant Beaupré alone in my own boudoir. The door was slightly open, lest any should suppose that I held indiscreet converse with one who, being a patriot, was of course an enemy of his majesty.

When first he entered, and stood before me with grave deference, I seemed to have nothing on my lips to say. The whole terrible scene from which he had saved me rushed before my eyes as I rose from my chair; and when I had given him my hand, and he had kissed it, I became suddenly dizzy and faint, and leaned back heavily against the window-frame.

Henri Beaupré seized a glass of water from my little *escritoire* and held it to my lips; and when I had taken the water, and had fallen back into my chair, I felt the colour rush to my face again, and took fresh courage and a stronger heart.

"I am not a good soldier, Monsieur Beaupré," I said, trying to laugh, but not succeeding well. "I should not make a good *citoyen garde* like you. The very sight of your face brings back



to me all that horrible scene. I seem to feel the clutch of those furies on my arms and hair."

A shudder passed over me from head to foot which gave just confirmation to my words.

"You went through the terrors of death, madame," he said. "I dread to think of it."

"Ah, Monsieur Beaupré! then I am not so weak? Does it make you shudder also?" I asked eagerly.

"For your sake—yes," he answered.

"I wanted to thank you," I said hastily, wishing to cut short this strange interview, which I found it beyond my power to manage to my liking—"to thank you for risking your life for me. But such service is quite beyond the possibility of thanks."

"Then do not utter them, lady," he answered. His voice was low, and seemed to tremble, as though his heart beat violently.

"But I am not ungrateful," I went on desperately. "I know well what I owe you, Monsieur Beaupré—my life itself."

I ventured to look a moment in his eyes; only for a moment, however. Even at that time of excitement I saw no reason why they should flash with such unseemly joy—I might almost have said with *triumph*, because I freely acknowledged my debt. Can it be that because I was an aristocrat this citizen soldier dared to triumph over me? Or does he venture to think of me in the way that other men have thought? Why not, since he also is a man, and the lowest of the *canaille* are in these days equal to the king?

"Do not speak of this matter, Lady Marguerite," he said; "it was no more than any other man would have done. And for myself, I count it the one great joy of my life that I was permitted to help you."

"That you were permitted?" I repeated slowly.

"Yes; that my God allowed me such grace."

"Oh!" I said with a sigh, "that is strange." And then I



asked him if he were not afraid when the mob flew at him—if he did not think the fury of those people just cause for alarm.

He smiled a little, as if considering.

"Was it?" he answered; "why yes, I think it was. But truly, madame, I was so rejoiced at your safety that I had no time to consider of any other danger. I think that a woman can hardly understand," he added, "that in times of great excitement a man is never afraid. Fear would not serve in a soldier."

I remembered my own alarm notwithstanding the proud blood which flows in my veins. Yet this fellow, who has no proud blood at all, but comes only of the people, was not alarmed. And I thought if there was any secret to be told that I would ask it of him, for in such times as these one has need of strength of heart.

"Is it because you are a Protestant, Monsieur Beaupré," I said, "that your heart is strong? Do you suppose it weakens the grace that one receives to have it pass through the hands of saints and angels?"

"God's grace is always sufficient," he answered with a smile, "and it need pass through no other hands than those of his dear Son."

"I am sure I need grace," I said, "for I was sorely afraid."

Ste. Marguerite knows I would never have spoken so if I had not been constrained, feeling sure he had some gift which I was lacking in.

For a moment he made no answer.

"Lady Marguerite," he said then, "be sure if you wish it that God's grace is free to you. And his keeping is sure. It may not always stand between you and death, but it can take away the fear of death; and death is no enemy to those who love the Lord."

Then with the tears coming fast to my eyes I took a sapphire ring from my finger and held it out to him.



"It is not a reward," I said—"I never could reward you *for my life*; but you know I must do something to show you that I am grateful."

He did not take the ring, and when I looked up at him I saw that the colour had mounted to his forehead.

"Madame," he said, "if you will give me only the rose which rests on your bosom, I shall consider it a gift of God. Do not fear," he added, with a smile of great gentleness; "you yourself keep relics of the saints which are worth more to you than sapphires."

Well, the dear Mother knows if I were wrong. But when a man has saved your life you cannot bargain with him about the price of it; so I gave him the flower which he preferred to my jewels. But, alas for my serenity! it had become caught in the lace upon my bosom, and I blundered sadly in loosening it. I believe I lost my composure and my patience together, and all for the whim of a man—a man of the people.

I watched him closely then to see what he would do. He did not raise the flower to his lips, as a cavalier of noble birth might have done—which would surely have been an offence in such as he—nor did he carry it openly in his hand, as a trophy for all men to see; but loosening a button of his coat, he hid it away against his heart, and for this courtesy I thanked him from my soul.

This was all that passed between us. But now that the excitement of those terrible times is over, even this seems far too much. Excess of gratitude may carry one too far.

I said that the excitement was over, but I spoke rashly. I think sometimes that the seeming quiet about us is only like the quiet of ravenous beasts that have been sated and rest awhile. M. d'Arblay says a woman should be able to make every excuse for other women whose children are starving. Perhaps M. d'Arblay has reason. As I have never had little children of my own, I cannot weigh such matters, nor judge what mother-love may be. But God knows that those terrible



women who led us on to Paris looked quite incapable of any love for either God or man. How *could* they have such tender love for little children, or how could little children ever care for them? I cannot see how the spirit of love could transform a woman into a beast of prey.

M. de Nesle has returned, and I am glad. His presence gives a feeling of rest to my heart. He has not lost all hope of better things, and his confidence strengthens mine. The ruin of the country is imminent truly, but he thinks the king and the royalists will work out some deliverance. For the present, even in the palace we are surrounded by enemies, who smile like friends, and M. de Lafayette, our jailer, is chief of these. He is king, and the court and the people are his humble servants. But, blessed be the saints! there are many secret stairways and unknown passages even in the hated Tuileries; and the queen has not lost her courage. Dear heart! she had need maintain it; there is great and sore occasion. The body-guards being disbanded, she is no longer protected by courteous gentlemen, but *canaille* guard her very chamber-door, whose insolence is astonishing.

One takes a sort of sorry comfort in gazing out into the court-yard at the red uniforms of the Swiss; for you cannot even pass from room to room without stumbling over some rude fellow who has not the grace to salute you as you pass. They are underfoot like vermin everywhere, and M. de Lafayette also is everywhere. Sometimes I will not even look at him, I become so angry. I asked him once, after I had met him for the fourth or fifth time in the course of a morning, how many Messieurs de Lafayette there were, and whether they were not sufficient to stand in *every* corridor. Whereat he looked somewhat grieved for a moment, and then laughed and begged my pardon that he had troubled me so often.

I must relate one thing concerning her majesty to prove what a truly forgiving temper she has shown. There has been an investigation, simply for the sake of form, into the outrages of



the fifth of October, and a deputation was sent to the queen, to receive her testimony in regard to that day when the rabble pierced her bed with their pikes. "I will never be an informer against any of my subjects," she replied. "I saw everything, knew everything, and have *forgotten* everything."\*

No one who was not royal in soul as well as in station could have spoken thus.

I suppose God makes saints and martyrs of just such souls as hers.

\* Weber.



XVI.

*AN AMNESTY.*

ANNETTE had not been sitting with crossed hands on the day when her countrywomen were clamouring for bread. Being off duty that day, and at liberty to act for herself, she joined her good sisters of Paris so soon as the news of their coming reached her. Annette was not only what men called in those days a true patriot, she was also wide awake to whatever scheme was brewing, and did not frown on women who asked for bread, even although they asked in too vehement a fashion and with unwashed faces. Moreover, she knew the court quite well, and loved it little; the very fact of her servitude made it hateful to her. All things become hateful to one who looks upon them with envious eyes. There were not a few of the gay cavaliers and fair ladies at Versailles whom she counted among her enemies, not because they had shown her unkindness, but because they sailed about unconscious of her presence, as the stars sail over the fire-flies. They abounded in happiness; while she dressed her lady's hair, and did her lady's will, for the very bread which fed her.

She had strange speculations as she mingled with the crowd on that memorable Monday in October. Not being hungry like those without nor in constant danger like those within the palace, she could look upon the whole scene as one who has nothing at stake may watch a play and criticise the players.

Annette hung somewhat upon the skirts of the crowd, although, being a patriot, she would willingly have mounted



a cannon with Demoiselle Théroigne; for it would be doubtful charity to take the bread from her own mouth on the chance of feeding thousands. And so, as night came on and drew again toward morning, and M. de Lafayette's presence had only closed the château more closely than before, she slowly wended her way towards her uncle's house. Being wearied and ill at ease, her first feeling was one of impatience at finding all the lower floor crowded to suffocation with tired wayfarers, exhausted National Guards, and indignant patriots of St. Antoine. Her uncle's hard old heart had grown soft that night, for all who stood against the king and the court were his brothers. Manon had spread beds and pillows on the floor, and when these had failed, old pieces of tapestry, and rugs which were worn and faded with years,—turning every corner into a place of rest.

Annette shuddered. She was a patriot, to be sure, but custom had made her a little fastidious. Because she *was* a patriot she also would have liked a foothold.

"Ah, *bah!*" she said softly to herself, "one cannot even breathe."

Without, it was worse even than within, for the rain was falling heavily. She sighed as she thought of her lady, who doubtless, notwithstanding her fright, was wrapped in pleasant slumbers. It was always *les aristocrates* who had all things.

Annette strolled into the kitchen, the only spot not wholly encumbered with sleepers. Two or three men and some women were gathered about the fire, less for the sake of warmth than to dry their soaking garments. Annette also being cold and wet, crouched down unobserved in a corner, and drew back into the shadows, listening.

Some one was saying that it was all up with the king if he refused to go to Paris, for the king belonged to the people.

The man who was nearest to Annette bent over and spoke her name. She gave a start of surprise, then as quickly re-



covered herself. "Is it you?" she asked in an undertone. "And what have you been doing to-day?"

"My duty as a Frenchman," he answered promptly.

"That means that you stood with the women and howled '*À bas les aristocrates!*'" said Annette with supreme scorn. "That seems to be the duty of Frenchmen now-a-days; but that is no famous thing to do. We might all starve for aught the men would compass."

The man laughed hoarsely. "You ask too much," he said; "you would like an end at once. There is never an end without a beginning. You would like, I suppose, to see that proud young mistress of yours swung to the *lanterne*. Have patience; we shall see." And again he laughed—a disagreeable, quiet laugh, which irritated Annette. She drew back a little and frowned. Her heart had never been a tender one, and never since her childhood had she been used to bestowing affection either here or there; yet she had a certain kindness for her beautiful mistress which made her shudder at his words.

"I wish no harm to my lady," she answered shortly.

"We shall see how long that will last," said the man.

Annette was silent. There seemed a tone of prophecy in what he said. She remembered the evil thoughts which had risen in her own heart at Henri's interest in the Lady Marguerite, and evil feelings grew apace in such a soil.

"Tell me," she said suddenly in an undertone, "what have you against my lady?"

"Ah, my pretty maiden, you were not sleeping the other day, for all your seeming," he answered with a harsh laugh. "When you hate her as I do, then I will tell you; for then your heart will beat with mine, and you will understand. I have reason to think *that* time will soon arrive, Mademoiselle Annette."

"What do you mean?" she asked fiercely.

"I also have my eyes open," he replied. "I am not always sleeping when I feign to do so."



"I believe you *never* sleep," said Annette impatiently. "I have been warned against you as an evil associate, and well I believe my counsellor had reason."

"Oh, I understand that also," he rejoined with rising anger. "That dark-haired cousin of yours, with his handsome face and his airs à l'aristocrate—he is the counsellor. Oh! that is easy reading. Never heed his warnings, Mademoiselle Annette; he has no thought for you."

At that he laughed again, and his laughter, which was never musical, jarred more than ever upon the feelings of Annette.

"You know nothing at all," she cried indignantly. "Do all my lovers declare themselves in public?"

"I do not sleep much, as you say," he answered, "and I know things which I have not mentioned."

Annette turned away with an exclamation of disdain, but her eyes flashed with anger.

"Come now, *citoyenne*," said the man, with a certain rough good-humour, "we are both patriots when all is said. We each mean the same tune, though we set it in a different key. Some day you will not be so savage at me. I don't ask much now, only your hand in token of good-fellowship."

"I don't want to give my hand to every one," said Annette—"not even to be kissed à la grande dame. As to good-fellowship, a woman with a conscience—"

"Ah! so," he interrupted, "you have a conscience? Well, so have I, mademoiselle. I do not give it into the hands of the priest, but to the nation."

Annette laughed. "It is a very vile one, I know," she said. "However, I will not swear to hate you until you give me cause."

It was two days after that, in the forenoon, as Marguerite sat with heavy eyes at her writing-table, that Annette tapped at the door and was admitted. She stood for a moment irresolute.

"Madame will not smile upon me," she said at length, in a tone of grief.



"I expected to find you at the palace on Monday, Annette," said Marguerite coldly.

"Madame knows," said Annette humbly, dropping her eyes, "what terrible scenes there have been. The good saints know what I have suffered on madame's account."

Her voice was low, and trembled with emotion. Marguerite's heart was touched. Annette was a good girl, even though a patriot; and with some misgivings she reinstated her in favour.

It was only a few days after that, one morning while Annette was adjusting her lady's slipper, that she suddenly observed, with a faint laugh, "I think I must be growing fanciful, madame, since my fright, for I surely thought I saw my cousin Henri at the door of madame's boudoir yesterday at noon."

"You should recognize your cousin face to face," said Marguerite calmly, though her colour rose a little. "It is not strange that you should meet here and there."

"Oh no, madame," said Annette, with a touch of embarrassment, "that is not strange. Only I had an odd fancy that he might have business with madame. Young women who are in love have foolish fancies. Madame will pardon me."

"I suppose," said Marguerite, ignoring the main question, "that you think perhaps that cousin of yours was asking my leave to wed you. Do not fear; I will dower you well, Annette."

Marguerite marvelled a little at her own want of sympathy in such a cheerful prospect; but this brave man, who had saved her life, seemed worthy of a kindlier lot.

"He will make a good husband," said Annette, eying her closely from under drooping lids. "And now that the National Assembly have such matters in their hands, he will soon be captain."

How easily things were shaping themselves for this girl of the people, thought Marguerite; while for herself, who had the king's will on her side, and a noble, importunate lover,



her own heart answered vaguely, or with a sort of dumb defiance. She did not reflect that a woman's heart is apt to go where there is no following, and where prudence and custom both have barred the way. Her knowledge had been limited to hearts of the old *noblesse*; and although she had read of ladies in ancient times who allowed their affections to wander after low-born lovers, yet she looked upon such accounts as a kind of fairy lore written to please the fancy. The ladies of her creed might be worshipped at a distance by whomsoever chose; their own affections were set on worthy objects, and the blood in their veins was pure.

"Annette," she asked quite irrelevantly, "why is it that you are not a devout little Huguenot like your cousin?"

"The good saints sent me better teachers," said Annette, shrugging her shoulders. "My mother, like madame, had faith in our holy Church, and after her death the good sisters at the convent brought me up."

"Perhaps, Annette," said Marguerite wistfully, "the saints have less power than we think, being human like ourselves."

She was longing so for the "water of life" that she groped blindly for every possible fountain—for every chance traveller who might show her the road to it.

"I never thought of it, madame," said Annette, with her lids still lowered.

"Surely there could be no sin in going straight to the Lord himself if one felt the wish, Annette?"

"I never supposed there could be sin in praying in any way, madame," said Annette passively, "unless one carries it to such a pass as my cousin Manon. Since so many people never care to pray at all, those who wish to had best have all the liberty they choose."

"You are a wise teacher," said Marguerite, with a soft laugh. Counsel, surely, was not to be had from that quarter.

But about that time M. de Nesle returned, and his strong faith quieted her heart. She found herself sometimes leaning



upon him unawares. At other times, again, she was chafed by the gentleness of his manner. His confidence in Bouillé and the *émigrés* provoked her to confess her mistrust of every one; while his indifference to M. d'Arblay, who daily swore vengeance against him, filled her with astonishment. He seemed to live a sort of charmed life which was invulnerable to grief or enmity.

One day, after they had been but a little while at the Tuileries, Marguerite was so beset with a desire to rouse this lover of hers—to prove to herself, if she might, “what manner of man” he was—that she began to attack the king in his presence.

“What a blessed thing it would be for France if we had but a hero for our king!” she said.

“Heroes are very well, *ma mie*,” he said; “but our king is born for a martyr—he has the old martyr-spirit. God has need of such kings also, Marguerite. ‘The world passes away,’ we know; ‘but he that does the will of God abides for ever.’”

“But God has need of *heroes* too,” she said with quiet emphasis.

“Of heroes here, and of martyrs there—yes, that is true,” he answered frankly. “And he knows where each can work the best for his glory. If he had had need of a hero now to meet rebellious France, he would have called another Henri Quatre to work his will. It is necessary that such a king should set forth the infamy of such a people as this. A martyr-king lives on for ever.”

“I had rather he lived as a hero,” she answered. “Women love heroes.”

“It is easy to be a hero,” said the young man gently; “they wave their banners before men’s eyes. But it is the martyr-souls who wave the palm branches, and follow the Lord in heaven.”

“To my mind it is easy to sit still and call oneself a martyr,” she replied with gentle vehemence. “If instead of our royal martyr, we had Henri Quatre or the Great Louis on



the throne, should *you*, monsieur, be as ready to be a hero as you are now to be a martyr?"

He smiled a little, answering the scorn in her voice. "One cannot tell," he said; "perhaps not. It takes many things to make a hero; and you must not look to me for deeds of valour, Marguerite. Of one thing rest content—I shall be loyal to the king."

"Ah! well you have the blood of heroes in your veins," she answered slowly.

"And that does not always make one a hero," he replied. "Whatever God and holy Church shall call for me to do, that I shall have grace to accomplish. An angel does no more. God makes heroes, dear one."

"You and the king are both so set upon martyrdom," she said, with so sweet a laugh as half atoned for all her bitterness, "that I fear you would not raise a finger to save the crown."

"I would not have the king soil his conscience to save his crown," he answered; "but I trust in God he will be shortly delivered. If his majesty believes that God has given him a charge, and will hold him surety for the blood of his people, it would be a deadly sin if he should cause it to be shed. Others must work for him."

M. de Neale was always gentle with her; he never resented her words or criticised her actions. The old traditions of chivalry still clung, as I have said, to this powdered *chevalier* of King Louis. Marguerite was his liege lady, to whom he owed all faith and confidence. He never doubted her. As to the rest, their cause of controversy seemed to melt away; for the king's "good people of Paris" became so grateful for his presence among them that they seemed bent on making his imprisonment a continual *fête*. Cries of "Vive le roi!" flew through the air as abundantly as the leaves of autumn. The musty old palace was transforming itself into a fit residence for the descendant of St. Louis. Carpenters and upholsterers gave an air of life and activity to every corner; while still, as



at Versailles, an appreciative populace strolled through the corridors to see the work go on. For the king belonged to the people! The little dauphin had a small garden spot, where he worked every day with shovel and hoe; and the people, who just then loved him adoringly, stood looking with delight at his beautiful face. Every day had become a *fête* day. There was always something to see, and men forgot their hunger.

André Beaupré, being known as a good patriot and an excellent workman, had been given work in a portion of the Tuileries. This also had made it necessary that he should remove his family to Paris. They had taken a small house not far from the Pont Notre Dame, and Lucile had come to live with them. Their prospects had grown suddenly bright; for old André had many patriot friends—above all, M. Danton, who, being President of the Cordeliers' Club, and having much influence with those in power, had recommended him for an honest, trustworthy fellow. Manon, who had never fancied M. Danton, had suddenly grown grateful, and fell to chiding herself for former unkind feelings. As to the rest, she thought it a brave move of the people to bring the king to Paris. It was a presage of all manner of future good that the king came, not of his own free will, but solely because the people demanded that he should. The people were not chattels then, but had certain rights which even kings respected. A people who could "conquer their king," as Mayor Bailly had so eloquently expressed it, must without doubt be strong enough, in due time, to bring down the price of bread and root out other evils.

People shook each other warmly by the hand, and laughed merrily together over the new outlook. It was so sociable and comfortable to have the king and the great Assembly right in the midst of them. Prices would go down now, and all disagreeable things like hunger and cold should vanish like the troubles of a dream.

M. Foucher in those days became a frequent visitor. His



time seemed equally divided between his newspaper articles, the Riding-hall where the constitution was framing, and the small parlour of André Beaupré. Even Manon could not fail to see that she herself was the chief object of his visits. In fact, he had told her as much in metaphorical language: how could one be a Jacobin and talk like other folk?

Manon was not hard-hearted. Better times were coming—were already here. Why should she not be happy with her country—if, indeed, she were quite sure that M. Foucher and happiness were one? She was turning the question over in her own mind one afternoon when M. Foucher appeared. Her sister had taken the little Félice for an airing in the palace garden, and she was busy over a pair of black stockings which her father had left to be darned. Now that there was so much going about in the work on the palace, there were more stockings than ever to be darned, and the holes were larger. She threaded curious thoughts in and out with her cotton—rose-coloured thoughts. Some one—M. Foucher, perhaps—had told her what the happy *dames de la halle* had said about the king's coming: all would be well, for the "good papa would be among them now." It seemed so blessed to think of the king as a father in the midst of them, and they his children.

Then a little sigh escaped her, and the smile died upon her lips. Would the queen ever let him be a father?

M. Foucher, meanwhile, had quietly opened the door, and stood before her in time to catch the sigh.

"Oh, why should such sadness lodge in such a tender heart, Mademoiselle Manon?" he exclaimed.

Manon turned toward him with a nervous start, and the colour mounted to her face.

"Monsieur," she said, "my father is not at home, and I am but poor company."

"Let a man make choice of his own companionship, my friend," said this black-haired young man, with an air of gal-



lantry. "The voice that speaks to my heart is the one to which I would listen."

Manon glanced shyly at his face, and thought to herself, as she had done many times before, that he was not an ill-looking lover—many a maiden had far worse than him; and Manon was so unused to the voice of flattery that she did not listen to it with feelings of mistrust.

With an air of demure gravity she bade her guest be seated; and as she spoke, her plain little face was quite transformed by the rosy colour with which his words had painted it. She looked into his dark eyes with a feeling of reverence, thinking it strange that one so wise should condescend to her simplicity.

M. Foucher belonged to that club called *Jacobin*, recently formed from the *Club des Bretons*, which met in the old convent of the Jacobins. Only able men and true patriots were enrolled in that fraternity; therefore M. Foucher must needs be both able and a patriot. There were many clubs in those days, but this especial club seemed to tower above them all, and had already formed its branches throughout the provinces. Manon was proud of having a friend among its members.

"Mademoiselle Manon," the young man continued, seating himself in the best position to view the young girl at her darning, "I would like to know the reason of that sigh."

"I think it was an after-thought," said Manon with some hesitation. "I had been glad in my heart at the king's coming and at the victory of the people. Every one says the king is very good; but then," she added, growing more earnest in her tone, and laying her work in her lap, "I remembered the queen, and so I sighed."

"*À bas l'Autrichienne*," muttered M. Foucher between his set teeth in a low growl like far-off thunder, tossing back, at the same time, his long black hair, which, after the manner of the Jacobins, he wore unpowdered. "As Jezebel was to Israel, and Messalina to Rome, so is she to France. As quoth



Jehu, so say I, 'What peace, so long as this woman rules the land?'"

And Manon remembered the terrible things which Annette had heard on her journey, and shuddered.

"Could not we send her back to Austria, to her own people?" she asked.

M. Foucher laughed bitterly. "She may be sent further than that," he answered.

Manon looked up with wondering eyes, not reading his meaning.

"Oh, I don't wish to see her punished," she replied. "I think if she is as evil as folk say she has great need of prayer."

"Prayer!" he echoed wonderingly. "Yes, mademoiselle, doubtless she needs it; but do not pray for her. Ah, my friend, let us not speak of her. In this glorious time of the nation's awakening let us think also of ourselves—let our own hearts awake."

Manon sat with clasped hands, and her eyes on the stocking, which was not being darned. Whether her heart were awake or no, at least it fluttered beneath her bodice like a captured bird, and she could not answer.

"Union is strength," said M. Foucher. "The smiles of women inspire the heroism of men. Every hero needs an inspiration. Manon, will you be mine?"

To a prejudiced mind it might have seemed that this young Jacobin anticipated an uncertain future in crowning himself a hero. But Manon's mind was not prejudiced; her heart was simple, and she was already somewhat in love. She saw nothing amiss in his words, except that perhaps, like many others which he spoke, they were much in the style of his daily journal. She had a fitting dread that he might make a paragraph of them for the world to read to-morrow. Aside from that, they were pleasant words, and in old Scripture language "spoke to the heart of the damsel."



The colour wavered in her face, going and coming; her restless fingers clasped and unclasped each other; the lids which drooped on her cheeks were wet with sudden tears. She had thought but a little while before that it was no time for falling in love when the country was in trouble. Had the nation grown strong since then, and glad and prosperous? People were starving still, but they would have no less bread for the sake of Manon's love. Nay, more; for they two together might be better able to help the poor, if union were really strength.

She wavered. The *words* of M. Foucher alone might have failed; but when he approached her, on the impulse of the moment, and kneeling by her side began impetuously kissing her hand, she melted into sobs. His eloquence moved her the more as he began to think less of the words with which he framed his petition and more of the petition itself.

It needed a wiser maiden than Manon to contend against him then.

"I don't know," she said, with a little sob, "how much I care for you, Monsieur Foucher. It had not seemed right to me for any woman to be happy with such trouble in the land. I have blamed other women for it."

"Ah, there speaks the patriot heart!" he cried, "always true and unselfish, but not always wise. Shall we let the aristocrats have all the pleasure and all the comfort of living? Two patriot hearts that beat as one are very strong, my friend. And now that the nation triumphs, let us also be happy, you and me."

"I shall never marry until France is free," she protested—"until the constitution is going."

"If that is all," he cried laughing, "we shall not have long to wait. The constitution will *go* presently; and many other things will go in another fashion. *Ça ira*, we shall see."

"You know," she said, the colour rising again in her grave little face, "that I am a Christian. I mean I am not a Papist, but a Huguenot, and I love and serve the Lord."



"You may love and serve whomsoever you please," he answered, "be it Pope or saint or angel, so you will also love me, *mon amie*."

"But I shall always love my Lord the best, and serve him first," she insisted.

He laughed at this. "Even before the nation, then?" he asked.

"Always first," she answered, "and then my country after."

"And then myself, Manon?"

"Yes; then perhaps yourself," she answered, with a shy little smile. At which M. Foucher poured forth eloquent protestations, and ventured to raise his kisses from her hands to her cheek.

"Wait," she said, "for I have not finished yet. It seems to me that no one can serve France well who does not also serve his God. Do not take all this so lightly, *please*."

Whereupon M. Foucher was eager with his promises. He would never take anything lightly again which was a matter of concern to her. He was ready to be as good a Christian as she desired, if she would show him how—even a Huguenot, perhaps; what matter, since he hated both Pope and priest?

So Manon looked in his eyes, which seemed loyal and true, and trusted him with all the faith of her heart.



XVII.

*LUCILE IS COMFORTED.*

MANON WRITES.

MY hands have seemed so full for many months that I have had no time to write my thoughts. The winter has been very severe. Not that the cold was so intense, but food has been unaccountably scarce. No one can tell why there is not plenty, with the king in our midst and the Assembly sitting daily to make a constitution. The sight of people striving to be merry in the midst of their suffering touches one to the heart.

Of late my father has had little to do, only an odd bit of work now and then, and always the occupation, when other things have failed, of listening to debates in the Assembly. This may be helpful to his heart, but it never puts money in his pocket.

Since I have been betrothed to Jacques Foucher I have sometimes been at pains to conceal from him how hungry I am. But my father says that we have reached the point where hunger has become a badge of patriotism, a sign by which one can discern the true *citoyen* from the false. He does not wish for more than a crust, he says, while the nation is starving; and he mistrusts patriots who are sleek and well-fed.

It has been a hard winter, also, because Lucile has been so frail, and the lack of nourishing food has slowly reduced her strength. But we all suffer together; and the king has been



most kind. He himself redeemed the goods of the poor which were pledged in the *mont de piété*. The people love the king; he would be a kind father if he had no wife. But the queen is bitter and revengeful; she never smiles upon the people now. Notwithstanding, since I know that she is so great a sinner, and has such need of pity, I have less temptation to hate her than I used to have. I know that my Lord had mercy upon sinners, hating only their sin. And when I remember this, I try to take her part with Jacques and Annette. Above all, last winter, when all the world cried out on her ingratitude, I sought excuses for her. The people of Paris were so glad to have their majesties at the Tuileries that they longed to have the queen show herself at the theatres and other public places. But she would not please them; and for this I did not blame her overmuch, since theatres are but worldly devices at the best, and can never lead to good.

But the reason which her majesty gave was quite diverse from this. She said she had still such clear recollection of the ghastly spectacle held ever before her eyes during her ride from Versailles to Paris, and the memory of her murdered guards lay so heavily upon her heart, that it would be impossible for her to take part in any scene of joy for many days to come.

M. Foucher declared that this was an atrocious thing to say—an outburst of womanly spite—as though one should prefer two men to a nation of twenty millions. He said, moreover, that the heads of the body-guards were *not* carried in her sight at all, unless she put herself to much discomfort to gaze at them.

"She shows a very vengeful spirit," said Annette, "to turn back the hearts of the people when they wish to love her."

"In fact," said Jacques, "the marvel is to me that there was no more blood shed on that day. The people were very merciful."

"If the queen feels sorrow for the death of her defenders," I said, "it shows, at least, some tenderness of heart."



"Sorrow! ah, *bah!*" said Annette. "If she had a tender heart, why should she not feel sorrow for the *people* who were killed?"

"If she were a true Frenchwoman," quoth Jacques again, "she would lay aside such personal feelings, and not let them mar the universal joy. The good, merry-hearted people meant no harm. The procession to them was an innocent jubilee. Do not be a royalist, my Manon."

But, indeed, I think this is the least evil thing I ever noted in her majesty. She has faults enough that one should not seek to multiply them. With such continual plotting one can scarcely sleep for fear. Since we heard that she and her council were about to blow up the city, I dream every night of being suddenly thrown into the air. They said stores of gunpowder were actually gathered underneath us, which might explode at any moment; but I have sometimes thought that this was a false alarm, for when they sent to search for the gunpowder there was nothing to be found. Jacques tells me it had been secretly removed; but if that is so, where can they have taken it? To the camp at Jalès, in the Cevennes, perhaps. There, they say, a great force of royalists is gathered, ready to fall upon Paris and cut the people to pieces. One can have no rest. If one tries to be happy, one hears afresh of gunpowder plots, or of royalists at Jalès, or the gathering of the emigrants at Coblenz.

But I think it hardly likely that the queen would wish to blow up Paris when she herself is in it, and so I said to Jacques; to which he replied that we should presently see. And really, if we are to be blown up, I think we shall *not* see at all.

In February the king took the oath to observe the constitution. My father was in the gallery of the Assembly Hall, and he says he never has been present at a grander scene. The king had purple velvet under his feet, embroidered with golden *fleurs-de-lis*; and when he said that no man desired the freedom



of France so much as he, every one applauded and waved his arm for joy. After his majesty had sworn, the Assembly also began to swear, and then the people in the galleries, so that the very roof rang with their shouting. And from that day the whole nation has seemed beside itself with a noble joy. From Calais to Marseille men have been taking the oath to be true to the constitution and the king. In such a glorious state of brotherhood I felt ashamed that I should be affrighted at gunpowder plots and camps of royalists.

It was decided to celebrate the dawn of liberty by a federation, and representatives were to come from all the provinces to take the oath together on the Champ de Mars, where the terrible Bastille had stood. There the ground was to be hollowed in a great basin from the École Militaire to the River Gate, and the earth heaped up on every side for the placing of seats, as in a Roman amphitheatre. An army of fifteen thousand men was set to work there every day. The work might well have gone forward.

Yet one day early in July, Mère Gascoigne stepped in to see Lucile and me. She also had moved to Paris, "to reap," as she said, "the benefit of the king's presence." She had been very cheerful too, but on this day she seemed wrathful and ill at ease.

"*Mes enfants*," she said, "that was a grand day when we brought the king to Paris; but now all goes wrong, for the king works against us."

Lucile shook her head. "One must always say something," said she; "and after all, Mère Gascoigne, you might as well have left the king in peace for all the bread his coming has brought us."

"The king cannot *make* bread," said Mère Gascoigne grimly; "but it is a great thing to learn to starve in company."

"I have heard," said Lucile, "that there are two hundred thousand beggars in Paris alone."



Neighbour Gascoigne knitted her brows.

"That is not all," she said : "the queen's friends are tampering with the labourers in the Champ de Mars."

I smiled a little, thinking neighbour Gascoigne's fears had made her fanciful. Such good patriot labourers should surely be above a bribe.

"It is true," she said ; "but it is a puzzle to me. They are Frenchmen, all of them, *les scélérats* ! They have French hearts in their bosoms, and French babies crying for bread. It is not in reason that they should be slack about their work, unless they were paid for slackness. Why, the saints bless you, child ! they won't work over a bare seven hours a day ; and what will become of the federation and the grand jubilee ?"

"Even if the work is not finished," I rejoined, laughing a little at her vehemence, "there are worse things to bear—having no food, and fear of gunpowder schemes." But Mère Gascoigne would not be convinced.

I think it was about an hour later when I slipped up to my room, and found that Lucile had thrown herself wearily across the bed. On seeing me she raised her head and blushed, as though she had been doing something wrong.

"I was sleepy," she said, "and thought I would steal a nap while you were talking."

Félice, who had been playing on the floor, came and climbed upon my knee.

"There is very loud talking below," said my sister gently.

"Yes," I answered, caressing Félice ; "father is quite as angry as Mère Gascoigne that the men are not working better on the Champ de Mars."

Lucile smiled wearily. "We have known Mère Gascoigne many years, my sister," she said. "She *thinks* a great deal. The king will not work against his people."

"But the queen and the aristocrats may," I answered somewhat shortly, for Lucile's patience and charity have been often grievous to me.



"The queen has a kind face," Lucile persisted. "Mère Gascoigne says too many unkind words of her majesty."

She spoke gently, but her cheeks were flushed. My sister was never given to much speaking, and now the effort seemed so great that she fell back wearily on her pillow.

"I am not ill, dear," she tried to assure me, although she gasped for breath; "only a little tired, and the weather is so warm. I often used to say in the old days, I remember, 'Dear neighbour Gascoigne, do not fret; the world did very well for nearly six thousand years without you.'"

Lucile closed her eyes—some old remembrance brightened her face for a moment; then suddenly she grew sad again.

"There is so little of the spirit of Christ in these times," she said, "I am tired of the strife."

I made no answer; but as she closed her eyes, and seemed inclined to sleep, I laid a soft old shawl over her shoulders, and was about to turn away with Félice, when she looked up in my face and laid her hand on mine.

"Manon," she said, in a sort of wistful way, "have you made up your mind to marry?"

"Not now," I answered, "oh, not for a long time, Lucile,—not until the country is free and every one has bread."

"I was not thinking of the country, but of *you*," said Lucile. "Think twice over it, Manon, and then think again, dear; for *after* you are wedded *thinking* will not avail."

"And is it not well to be married?" I asked. "You yourself did not *think* so long, Lucile."

"No," she said; and then she sighed. "I have been *thinking* ever since. My husband is a good man; but that is not enough, and Félice is hungry. But for you, O my sister!" she cried, suddenly throwing her arms about me, "marry and be happy, whether France is free or not, but do not marry that man who woos you now."

"O Lucile!" I cried, "why should I not marry M. Foucher, since I love him?"



"Ah, then," she said in a tired way, closing her eyes again, "it is all done. *My* sorrows have sometimes drawn tears; but Christ has been very pitiful, and my husband loved me. I wish *you* may never have more to grieve over than I have had, Manon."

I went out to the Champ de Mars after leaving Lucile, taking the little one with me. In those days all Paris strolled in that direction; and when, before sundown, the work ceased, all Paris howled with indignation that it had not lasted longer. This day, however, every one saw a wonderful sight; for when those fifteen hundred lazy men stopped working at the striking of the hour, there were fifteen hundred citizens who for love and loyalty seized the tools which had been dropped, and, as if inspired by one soul, fell to working in their stead. The howl became a general shout of joy; those who had no tools pulled off their hats and waved them in the air. The work would stay no longer when all Paris had put its "shoulder to the wheel."

Ah! those were glorious days that followed; such a time of exultation as no one had ever seen in Paris until then. Even women took their spades and wheel-barrows day after day, and sometimes there were two hundred and fifty thousand people working at one time—all for love and none of them for gold.

I did no work myself, for Lucile was so weak that I was afraid to leave her very long alone. But I stole away every day for a little while to see the others working, and it seemed as though even the telling of what I had seen gave new strength to Lucile. There were some folk at first who sneered at the enthusiasm of the others; but the crowd set upon them in a good-humoured way, and forced them to do their part. This, I warrant me, soon cured them of their jesting. But there were some who said no—none but patriot hands should take part in such a work, lest the altar of liberty should be defiled.

One day—the very last day of all—when the work was almost completed, Lucile gathered strength to go and see the



glorious sight. She sat on a broken wheel-barrow which some kind *citoyen* arranged for her, seeing her so weak ; and another *citoyen* brought her a glass of wine. After this the colour came into her face, and she looked glad and restful. There seemed no good reason then why I should not lend a hand to help the nation ; so I left the little one beside Lucile, and went with Jacques to dig a few spadefuls of earth, just for the sake of having a share in such a blessed toil.

"My dear," said Jacques, "it gives me great joy to work beside you so."

I think I remember every word that any one spoke to me that day. I smiled, but did not answer him.

"Heart beating with heart," said Jacques again ; "dost thou not like it so, Citoyenne Manon ?"

He said this laughingly, but with great tenderness, and I thought he had never looked so well.

In a few moments I returned to Lucile. She was pale and tired.

"Manon," she said, "this really is true brotherhood ; this is the most blessed sight that I have seen. I thank God for this day."

As we turned homeward with Félice, I saw that my sister walked wearily, and I put my arm about her. But she would not lean upon me ; I was such a little thing myself, she said smiling, and she was well able to walk.

She stopped a moment on the threshold and said suddenly, "It was a beautiful enthusiasm, Manon ; but I feel that it will not last."

"Why should it not last ?" I answered quickly. "It seems like the Golden Age—like the very gateway of heaven."

"I think it is the gateway of heaven to me," said Lucile gently, moving into the house.

Not understanding her meaning, I took little heed of her words, but continued with my own.

"Love conquers all things, Lucile. Did you see that man



who even threw down his waistcoat with his watch in the pocket, and went off to work, and no one laid a finger on it. He could trust his brothers, he said. Lucile, it is like the millennium."

Lucile smiled. "A little," she said, "but not entirely. If there is great love, there is also great hatred."

She lay back in father's chair with such a tired look that I brought a pillow to place behind her; and Félice, watchful as a little dog, and more keen even than I, climbed upon her knee.

I hurried into the kitchen to beat up an egg. There were only two in the house, and I had been hoarding them for her. I wanted also to make a bit of toasted bread; but the fire was low, and I had trouble to bring it up again. Even in the kitchen I could hear the distant shouts from the Champ de Mars. The work was finished—the people were rejoicing!

Lucile still leaned back in her chair when I brought her the egg. Her eyes were closed, but she was caressing the little one's head softly; and Félice looked in her face with a wondering gaze and lips apart.

"Manon," said my sister, opening her eyes as she heard my footstep, "I am not hungry, dear, but a little tired. I feel strangely—I cannot tell you how—it is not an earthly feeling. Do you suppose, Manon, it might be God's finger on my heart to stop its beating?"

How I longed for some brandy, for even a glass of wine, to give her then! I put Félice gently from her arms on the floor; but the child uttered a sharp little cry and clung feebly to her mother's chair.

"Put her back, Manon," said Lucile; "there is no rest like a child against your heart."

And when Félice had nestled again in her arms, and I began chafing my sister's hands, I found that they were cold.

"Yes," she said wearily, "it was a beautiful sight. Manon, do you think one might see *two* such glorious sights in one day—as that, and heaven?"



"Ah, hush, Lucile!" I cried in my distress; "take some water—try to eat the egg—you will be stronger soon."

She smiled, and took the water. "Yes, I shall be stronger soon," she said. "I 'shall *run*, and not be weary.' Manon, I have never *said* very much, but I have thought, and thought; in the long dark nights I have lain thinking."

I could not speak, but the tears filled my eyes.

"I have a feeling that I am going from much evil," she went on dreamily—"from a shadow like the shadow of death. O my little sister, if I could take you and Félice!"

She leaned forward and threw her arms about my waist, clasping Félice and me at once in her embrace, and lifting her eyes, which were wide and beautiful and tearless, to my own; and then she added faintly, "But for *me*, the Lord is very dear—and where he is 'they shall hunger no more.'"

The last words were so faint that I could scarcely catch the meaning of them. My poor, hungry Lucile! Her eyes closed, she smiled faintly, and her breath quivered, and ceased. I stood as if turned to stone; I had no tears. Félice clung to Lucile and cried, but I took no heed of her sobbing. I bent my head upon Lucile and wailed and moaned without a tear. I had never known, until death came between, how dear she was to me. And so, with a selfish heart, I forgot that she was already by fountains of living water, with the Lord to feed her.

It seemed as if every good thing had gone from life, and the nation's joy did not matter much.

And it was so, in such shadow as this, that the peace and liberty of the Lord came to us.



XVIII.

*PLUMING FOR FLIGHT.*

MARGUERITE WRITES.

1791.

WHEN I wrote last it did seem as though we had reached the end of all things. But I find that the world is still young ; there yet remains a future. We have again *levées* and *petits soupers*, and other amusements. Her majesty receives, and the Princess Lamballe ; and the queen can even smile as in other times. Nevertheless to me her smile is sadder than her tears. She is not so young as I, and finds it harder to forget. She wearies herself night and day over plans which cannot avail. She has secret counsels with members of the Assembly ; she writes letters to the emigrants ; she is full of projects. And meanwhile his majesty reads and muses, and plays his little game of cards. He fancies that he and his "good people of Paris" are growing more and more of a mind, and shall have everything their own way. Also he gives lessons in geography to the little dauphin, who can no longer dig in his garden since the days have grown so cold, but who loves his studies with "Papa Roi." And no marvel ! For his majesty is so even-tempered and gracious that it is a pleasure to be in his presence. Though of course, for being human, he bears a human nature still, which shows itself at times. For example, when the queen, a day or two ago, pressed him to act in some affair of moment, he replied quite curtly, "Madame,



*your business is with the children."* Her majesty smiled sweetly, and passed the matter over.

But while the king has such growing faith in human nature, I am mistrusting all the world, even my good Annette. It seems at times as though something were hidden in the depths of her eyes which looks out and laughs at me. I notice also that some one of her uncle's family is always ill on the eve of any public *émeute* or rejoicing. I am grown morbidly suspicious. She is one of the people.

One cousin died on the eve of that celebration last July—the feast of the Federation I think they called it. I call it in my own mind "the feast of the humiliation of the king." On that day, which I would like to blot from my memory, their majesties and all the court graced the triumph of the nation.

Annette had been absent for several days before, on the plea of her cousin's illness. Every night she would return and tell me with tears, actual tears, in her eyes that her cousin was no better—was in cruel suffering. And I comforted her as best I might, telling her that the rich as well as the poor have their sorrows, and that the blessed Mother has a tender heart for all.

And since that is true, I tried to keep my own heart warm for the sorrows of Annette; although I remembered that the whole city was working to excavate the Champ de Mars. We drove by it once in the afternoon, when the sun shone brightly, and truly it was a sight to make one weep, that the nation should work with such a will for the king's undoing.

The day before the *fête* Annette came to me saying that her cousin had died that afternoon. I put my arms about her, speaking all the comforting words that I could, for my heart was touched with pity for her excessive sorrow.

I spared her for two days from my service, uncomplainingly. And yet—sweet Sainte Marguerite!—although her cousin was lying dead at home, I saw her abroad on that day of the Federation, taking part in the humiliation of the king, and in



her company that wretched man who haunts and threatens me.

When she appeared the next day there were rings beneath her eyes as though she had been weeping. She laid the gold which I had given her in my hand.

"Madame," she said humbly, "Lucile had no further need, and my uncle is a patriot; he refuses to accept the alms of an aristocrat."

"Your uncle must have much false pride," I answered coldly; "and you, Annette, you have not been true to me."

"Alas!" she answered, "I have never had a thought which was not true to madame."

She threw herself on her knees before me, and tried to clasp my hands.

"Annette," I said, "you assured me that your cousin lay dead, and I believed and pitied you."

"Ay, madame," she answered, "my cousin was buried this morning, from the little Huguenot chapel. And my uncle is broken-hearted, and so is Manon; and the little Félice has no mother. You can ask my cousin Henri if this is not true."

"You, Annette, were not broken-hearted," I persisted. "I saw you yesterday at the *fête*, as merry as any one else."

Annette grew a little pale, but looked up boldly in my face.

"I was passing on my way to buy a few flowers to lay on my cousin's heart," she said. "We are very poor, madame, but we could not let her pass without a white rose or a jasmine on her bosom. Madame knows how great the crowd was. I became wedged among the people, and could not pass."

"Annette," I said gravely, but yielding a little, "you were *laughing*. Must one needs laugh because one is wedged in a crowd?"

"It was a merry crowd," said Annette, "notwithstanding the rain; and madame knows that a Frenchwoman may laugh sometimes with a heavy heart. Even her majesty smiled yesterday, and no one need say but that her heart is heavy."



"Why should not her majesty smile," I answered, "with her children beside her, and a loyal people crying, 'Vive le roi'?"

"Why, indeed?" said Annette demurely; "there is every cause for joy when such a brave people are joined in such noble brotherhood, madame."

Annette had risen from her knees, and stood with her eyes drooped as though she were seeing nothing. Yet truly I believe she saw quite as well as though her lids had been transparent.

"When I saw you yesterday," I said, "you were with a certain man who can do you no good—a man with a scar upon his face. Do you know him, Annette?"

"No, madame," said Annette with a puzzled air, raising her eyelids for a moment and dropping them again. "I forgot that I had spoken to a soul; my thoughts were on my errand. But now I do remember that a kind-hearted fellow—ah yes, madame, I think he *had* a scar upon his face. How well madame could observe in that one little moment!" Annette looked up suddenly, and my own eyes fell. "This kind fellow made a way for me to pass, and I thanked him for his trouble, and spoke a few pleasant words about the celebration. Yes, madame, I am quite sure he had a scar on his face."

"What is his name, Annette?" I asked.

"His name? alas, madame, I know not; but perhaps I can discover for madame."

"Annette," I said, becoming seriously vexed, "did not you see this same man on the second of October, a year ago, when we drove toward Paris?"

Annette vowed that she had *never* seen the man before.

She observed also, with a most respectful air, that I had an excellent memory and was very keen-sighted. "If I had an evil thought, madame, I should fear your eyes; but my heart is true, and I am not afraid."

I am growing also more and more mistrustful of Madame Fleurange. I wonder how she walks so softly. I have looked



closely at her shoes when I had opportunity, but I am no wiser. She appears so suddenly on all occasions. Even her majesty laughs over it ;—she still can laugh at times. Once she said to me merrily, “My good Fleurange has the step of a spirit, and the zeal of twenty ladies-in-waiting.”

And now something has occurred which I cannot understand. I was warned by Madame Campan only a few days ago that serious plans were forming, and therefore I was very glad to be summoned last evening to her majesty’s apartment. No one but Campan was with her, and she wished only to tell me what her desires were for *myself*, in case the plans succeeded.

As I left her majesty and passed into the ante-room I saw a dark figure crouching close to the door; and though at first I went on without heeding, yet the thought flashed upon me that no one could be in such a place at such a time for any manner of good. Turning back then, I laid my hand on the shoulder of Madame Fleurange.

She rose with a little yawn to her feet. Frenchwomen are seldom put out of countenance.

“Don’t be alarmed, *petite*,” she said; “I am no phantom. The queen desired me to wait for her here, and I was so drowsy I had fallen asleep. I really think her majesty has forgotten me after all.”

“I don’t think the queen has any further need of you to-night,” I said; “but if you wish it I will ask her.”

She answered quickly that there was no occasion, and followed me through the ante-chamber. But this little interview distresses me; I neither like to speak of it nor to keep it hidden in my own heart.

Meanwhile the party of the king is so strong that if he were once out of Paris there is little to fear. Here he is completely a prisoner, bound hand and foot; but all that are left of the old *noblesse*, and they are few, have rallied about him, while the emigrants grow stronger and stronger.



Royalists are furnished by the king with tickets of entry to the palace, so we no longer are overruled by the people. In this way the king knows his friends, and at her majesty's receptions we have loyal guests. It has also been judged best that royalists should be well armed, for the protection of his majesty. The court cavaliers have provided themselves with short poniards to serve in a hand-to-hand fight; and to conceal these weapons, they have adopted the fashion of wearing long black cloaks, which cause much suspicion among the people. M. de Neale wears one most gallantly, like a true cavalier. He still maintains a martial air, although since the body-guards have been disbanded he is employed wholly in diplomatic service for the king, carrying messages to De Bouillé and others. This is more his mission, perhaps, than fighting the king's battles, though one could not call it the *rôle* of a martyr.

It is strange I cannot adore him since he is so persistently blind to my faults. For himself, he has none that I can mention, except it be the fault of too great patience and of too equable a temper. He is so like other cavaliers who wear the long black cloak and the dirk. Why, sweet Sainte Marguerite! one can hardly tell each from the other, since all royalists wear moustaches now, and no patriot would be seen with them.

I had rather a man whom I hate who is unmistakable, than the greatest saint on earth who had no distinguishment.

I know of one man, a good patriot too, who stands out by himself. When that man finds a maiden to his heart she will be a happy woman, because she will never have a doubt that he is the bravest and best that earth can give her. But *she* will have no thought of marquises.

Count Mirabeau is turning royalist, and this is even more wonderful than the defection of M. de Lafayette. It makes one smile to think that the idol whom the people daily worship holds secret communication with the queen, whom they abhor.

It matters little after all how brutish a man may be, he becomes human at once under the witchery of her smile. This



hideous old agitator has stooped to kiss the hand of her majesty, and now *all things* may come to pass; although, in truth, I have often heard it said that anything which wears the smile of a woman can melt the heart of that old reprobate.

He thinks that the people are going too far, and wants to save the monarchy from being wrecked. I have heard also that he would like the prime ministry for himself. Her majesty trusts him, and considers him an excellent fellow; though she smiles at his homage, and though she trusts most of all to those who have always had true hearts—the royalists at home, and the *émigrés*.

But if there are faithful men without, there are also traitors within. I should not like to say that M. d'Arblay is one of these. He is, I should think, in an unhappy position—like the coffin of Mohammed—and does not seem quite satisfied what course lies open to him. He has opinions, but his position at court makes it desirable that he should wear them, as courtiers wear their dirks, beneath a cloak.

Meanwhile, in the eyes of the nation we have all become foundlings, and have no ancestors. If I should be so bold as to sign my name Marguerite *de Clairac*, not even my allegiance to the king would avail to help me. Our nobles who remain at home are dumb henceforth. For no one knows their obscure family names, and they may not use their titled ones. If one says mistrustfully, "Who are you, monsieur? I never heard of you before," it is not even permitted to reply, "I was *formerly* the Baron or the Marquis of this or that." One cannot have the contentment of saying what one used to be, but must wander like some ghostly visitant, uncounted and unknown. Since the nation has taken our names and our wealth, I wonder what can disturb it further?

This reminds me of something. Since yesterday, Henri Beaupré has guarded the queen's ante-chamber; and when I saw him there yester-noon, I smiled and said quite warmly that in the midst of spies it was pleasant to meet a familiar face.



"And a true *heart*, Madame de Clairac," he answered gravely.

"*Citoyen* Beaupré," I answered, with a touch of scorn, which our blessed Lady knows was not for him, "you incur great risk in calling me by my title."

He smiled, but grew at once quite grave again. "Then, lady," he said, "I will call you *Sainte Marguerite*; for even good patriots may still have patron saints."

His words were so audacious that I should have censured him one year ago, and he spoke in a tone of strange defiance; but whether it were myself or the nation whom he meant to defy, indeed I cannot say.

"Monsieur Beaupré," I replied, "you are too true a man to mock at serious things; and I know that you put no faith in the mediation of saints."

"I am not mocking, madame," he answered. "I may not put faith in heavenly saints, yet surely I can in earthly ones."

He spoke quietly, but his eyes lightened in such sort that he put me to a foolish confusion, and the colour flew to my face. This was great pity, for after that there was naught for me to do but throw back my head and pass him coldly by.

It was that same evening that, having arrayed myself for her majesty's soiree, I stood alone by the fire in the ante-chamber, musing how long it would be before the king should be at liberty and the good old times return.

The fire burned brightly, and the light of it flickered over the tapestry on the walls, making strange shadows in distant corners, and firing the brilliants of the great chandelier until they shone like precious stones. I drew up a chair by the soft blaze and sat there quietly with my hands folded. And sitting so, I began to think of what I had heard whispered that morning in regard to the king's flight, and it seemed as if, after all, one might begin to hope. Suddenly I heard a footstep beside me, and looked up expecting to see M. de Nesle, who, when at the palace, is never long from my side. Instead of my lover I saw M. d'Arblay standing beside me with folded arms. I saw also



that the moustache which he had been wearing of late through dread of displeasing the king had disappeared. And I remembered with a little shame that I had laughed at him for not standing by his colours and coming out boldly on that side where his love lay. Whereat he had grown angry, as a man always will when his courage is called in question.

"Mademoiselle," said M. d'Arblay, gazing into the fire and not at me, "I find you in such cheerful company that I hesitate to break the charm."

"Ay, monsieur," I answered shortly, "you can hardly furnish me with better company than the fire and my thoughts."

"There is no better company to be had this side of heaven," he continued, "than that of the Lady Marguerite."

The good Book says truly that "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

"Pray, monsieur," I asked more graciously, "what can *you* know of heavenly company?"

"I may fancy what it is like, madame," he answered, "from the little that I have known of angelic beings upon earth."

"Ah! then you have known angels, monsieur?" I asked quickly. "You should give thanks, for you are not likely to meet with them often. I do assure you, monsieur, that angels, both human and heavenly ones, will spread their wings and fly from this evil, turbulent land."

"I beg your pardon, mademoiselle," he answered. "France is at this moment in a blessed state of unity."

I laughed, but made no answer. Such sayings as that can surely not be answered.

"The king and the people understand each other at last," he went on; "the king has become their father."

"Monsieur," I answered quietly, "his majesty cannot *become* what he has always been. I grant you he grows more tender toward the nation as the nation grows more rebellious. Think of the vast sums which he gave to the poor last winter from his own private purse."



"Oh yes!" said M. d'Arblay, "that was well published abroad; no one can fail to remember."

"It is well to *remember*," I said quickly. "Do you remember also, in April, when Madame Royale took her first communion, why she did not have the *parure* of diamonds which has always been given to royal princesses at such a time before?"

"There was no reason that she should have them," he replied. "It would have been most unseemly, with people starving on every hand."

"Yes," I said; "you may say such things as that since you are not a king. I wish the people could understand how his majesty took Madame Royale apart and told her of their sufferings, and how she listened with wide, tender eyes shining through her tears. She loves the 'good people of Paris,' because she has always heard of their virtues—*les scélérats*."

"That is a hard title on a lady's lips for those who suffer," said M. d'Arblay calmly; but I took no heed.

"When his majesty told her that it would be better to take the price of her diamonds to buy bread for the poor, she put her arms about his neck and said with sobs that she would have no diamonds which could buy bread for those who were hungry," I went on.

"She is a good child," said M. d'Arblay gently, "and worthy of a better mother."

And then I grew very angry.

"Monsieur," I said, "your memory is so good perhaps you will recall that New-Year's day two years ago when every one talked of famine. Do you remember how the queen obliged the children to give the price of their New-Year's gifts to the poor, to teach them a lesson of charity. I fancy no one remembers it now but God and the angels."

Monsieur smiled. "It should be well remembered," he said, "since that also was well known. I have no word of reproach for the king, Marguerite. If no one stood between his majesty and the people, I believe he has the heart to do



what he promised two years ago—'work out their highest good.'

"Who stands between the king and the people?" I asked indignantly.

"The Comte d'Artois and the queen," he replied shortly; "and she has proved such a foe of mine that I reckon little how I speak of her."

"What evil has my dear lady ever done to you, monsieur?" I asked him thoughtlessly.

"She has shut the doors of paradise upon me," he replied with sudden passion, "as you know right well, Marguerite."

"Monsieur," I replied, "if I read your meaning rightly, and if such foolish love as I could give seemed paradise to you, the door was never even set ajar."

At this he darted upon me a look of scorn, as who should say that he knew right well had it not been for her majesty he should assuredly have conquered. Such conceit dwells ever in the hearts of men without a cause. Every man is a conqueror to himself, until one woman has prevailed to vanquish him.

"Why are you so perverse?" he said, "and why are you so blinded both to your own good and that of the king? All is going well; there is a blessed state of unity everywhere."

"I pray, Monsieur d'Arblay," I answered with indignation, "that you will not make such use of holy words as to call that state a *blessed* one which you know right well is but insurrection on the one side and humiliation on the other."

His colour rose. "Do you call it insurrection," he asked in a moment, "when a people bound to the earth cry out to have their chains removed? And what humiliation can there be, madame, for a king who uses his highest right of giving and forgiving?"

"I am glad that even Monsieur d'Arblay admits a cause for forgiveness," I answered, "since no one can doubt that his majesty is a saint when the question is one of pardon. I wot



well, monsieur, if you yourself were king, you would not be so eager to forgive a people who held you in bondage."

"If I had been king," he answered audaciously, "my people should have had no cause of complaint."

"Ah," I cried mockingly, "what a happy France we should have had with René d'Arblay king!"

"The king loves France," he continued, as though I had not spoken, "and the people's cause is his. Those who are plotting to carry him away are doing the work of the arch-destroyer, crushing every hope of peace and liberty."

And at this I began to see that M. d'Arblay suspected me of greater knowledge concerning the king's movements than I really possessed. For although I had a vague idea of the plot of M. d'Inisdal, which came to naught, I have not cared for further confidence. I only knew that *something* must soon be done, and prayed the blessed Mother to speed the day for the doing of it. But when M. d'Arblay spoke, with eyes that searched my face, I was conscious of growing pale.

"Who plans that the king should flee from such a loving people, Monsieur d'Arblay?" I asked indifferently.

"I hear rumours everywhere," he answered rapidly. "It is you, a queen's friend, who *know*. It is you who can do the king true service by telling me. A woman's hand may save the nation—now."

My face flushed, my heart beat quickly with indignation; but knowing how much might hang upon my words, I answered quietly, "If I am a queen's friend, I am an insignificant one. There are thousands of queen's friends all over the land. And you, monsieur, if I knew what you suppose, can you think that I could be such a traitress as to reveal the secrets of my queen?"

"I never could have a thought of you which I could not have of one of God's angels," he protested indignantly. "I ask you to serve your king by revealing the plots of his enemies."

"And I vow to you, Monsieur d'Arblay," I replied with indignation equal to his own, and my heart on fire at his treachery,



"that I am *not* informed of the king's plans or those of his enemies. Of the latter *you* surely need no information. But even if I knew, I would suffer many tortures, and (so God strengthened me) even death itself, sooner than betray his majesty. I have loyal blood in my veins, monsieur—blood that has beat true to many kings. I should scorn to be a traitress."

He stood confronting me, and as I looked up at him quickly, I saw something like despair in his eyes. He caught my hands in his, and I wrenched them from him. "You *will* not understand," he cried imploringly. "You cannot conceive the misery that the king will bring upon himself by an attempt at flight which is almost sure to fail, or the danger to his friends. Ah, Marguerite! will you not try to understand?"

"I cannot understand the language of treason, monsieur," I answered him, "for I have never yet been taught it."

"Then," he pleaded in a low voice, "if you will not listen to me, have the grace to forget what I have said. I have also a conscience, though it does not counsel in the same words as yours. Believe that my motives are true—that I am no traitor."

"I have no test by which to try a traitor," I answered wearily, "and none but God can judge us."

"Will you do me the justice to believe that I have the king's best good at heart?" he insisted still.

"I will do you the justice to believe that you have the best good of the *people* at heart," I answered bitterly.

Then surely I was astonished at M. d'Arblay, for he fell on his knees before me and clasped my hand in his. I dreaded each moment lest the door should open.

"Pardon me," he said, "and forget my words. Give me this crust of kindness: leave me your friendship, or I am bankrupt indeed."

"Monsieur," I answered, smiling in spite of myself, "if *you* will forget both your words and your treason, I may well promise to do the same."

At that instant a welcome footstep in the corridor relieved



me from the burden of this interview—only to prepare the way for another. As I went through the ante-chamber on my way to the queen I passed close by Henri Beaupré, who was still on guard.

"Madame," he said sadly, as I spoke to him in passing, "when you have grieved your patron saint you pray for pardon. Is it not so?"

I glanced up quickly at him, astonished at his words. He had not the air of a suppliant, yet there was a look of pain upon his face which touched my heart. If it were not such a tender heart I should be a braver woman.

"If it is *my* pardon which you ask," I replied, "I will forgive you. In these times of equality, I know that all claims to deference and respect are forgotten; only I thought that you, Henri Beaupré, would have had honour enough to remember."

If my words seemed bitter, I spoke them gently; yet the dark blood rushed to his face and his eyes kindled.

"You do me wrong," he said in a low voice. "My dreams of heaven, the memory of my dead mother, do not fill me with more reverence than my thoughts of you, madame."

Alas! it is all in vain. Every word of explanation with such a man as that only increases one's trouble and perplexity. If only he also were of noble blood!

Oh, *fi donc!* what am I writing? It is late, and my eyes are heavy with sleep, and I must be dreaming. But since I am prone to foolish reveries, it may be better that I should avoid the door of her majesty's ante-chamber.



XIX.

AT ST. EUSTACHE.

ON one of those early April days in the year of grace 1791 there was a strange outpouring of people through the streets of Paris. It was not an *émeute*; this was no such crowd as carried the king from Versailles. Even the Sansculottes, as they began to be called, were orderly and quiet; more than that, they walked with bowed heads and an air of solemn reverence. Eyes looked out through tears, and breasts heaved visibly with sobs, as the sad procession moved along. One would have said that the whole city mourned; and that was true. The nation had lost a father. The "darling mother Mirabeau" of the *dames de la halle* had made his last effort in the cause of France. As he had foretold, there was no head left behind able to carry out his projects, and no arm strong as his to save the land from ruin.

If one had been gifted with prescience on that April day, one might have seen that it was not that weeping multitude who had most cause for sorrow, but those who sat in the palace. And if the crowd of mourners who followed close behind the bier could have looked but a little way into the future, they might well have turned their faces homewards, and so have saved the labour, which came but a few months later, of tearing down the bust of their idol from its pedestal in the hall of the Jacobins and grinding it to powder with their feet. But the future being veiled from their eyes, the cry of their hearts,



if they could have given it voice, would have been, "My father! my father! the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

A hundred thousand people, it has been said, marched in this funeral procession; the nation and the king wept together. The Assembly and the royal ministers were chief mourners, while the house-tops, the windows, the streets were thronged with a silent audience not less sorrowful.

On the steps of the Church of St. Eustache, in the shadow of one of those massive pillars, stood Annette. In the midst of a multitude she was in no one's company, and the tears which filled her eyes were honest tears, and sprung from a troubled heart. It seemed to her, as it had seemed to him who was lying dead, that the champion of French liberty had been suddenly cut down. While the people were pressed to right and left, and the bier was slowly carried up the steps, she sobbed aloud: this sorrow was her own.

Salvoes of artillery were fired as the bearers entered the door of the church, and the mighty reverberation shattered the stained glass of the windows into a thousand fragments. A bit of glass flying through the air struck Annette upon the temple. The blood trickled slowly down over her face, and, conscious of the pain, she put up her hand to her forehead and took it away red with blood. Some one who stood by, touched with a feeling of brotherhood, bound a handkerchief about her head; but Annette only smiled.

"I do not care," she said; "it is nothing now."

Enthusiasm had wrought in her a genuine unselfish sentiment. She was fired with a kindred feeling to that of the young man who had gone a few days before willingly to offer his blood, that the exhausted energies of that old "people's friend" might be restored.

Henri Beaupré had command that day of a small body of National Guards, who were stationed by the steps a little below Annette, and during the long funeral oration he approached her



through the crowd, and asked in a tone of brotherly concern after her injuries.

"Oh!" she answered quickly, and with a wistful smile, "it is a mere trifle, Henri. How can one feel suffering to-day?"

Henri's eyes glowed. "Ay," he answered, "that is true, Annette; we are all bereaved."

"But, Henri," said Annette, her voice scarcely audible through the sound of the muffled music, "there is a sweetness even in grief which we share with each other."

"Yes," said Henri obtusely, "the hearts of all Frenchmen beat as one heart to-day. We are all united in the same love and the same sorrow."

"O Henri!" Annette exclaimed, her eyes filling again with tears, "is a grief which we share with *all the world* such a precious thing as that?"

"Annette," he answered gravely, reading her meaning it may be, yet choosing to set it aside, "there is no closer meaning in this death to me. The hand which would have joined all parties in peace and brotherhood is still."

"He sleeps—these were his words," said Annette musingly; "he was so tired, and he sleeps."

A cloud passed over Henri's face. "He has gone to render his account to God, Annette," he answered; "and may God be merciful!"

"O Henri, that is cruel," said Annette: "let him sleep on in peace. I think you love to be cruel—you like to break people's hearts. You will not look upon one who loves you as being more to you, any closer in your sorrow, than all of France might be. Is there nothing closer, dearer in one's life, than a national brotherhood?"

"Ay," said Henri, his eyes growing suddenly tender, as if with some blessed memory. "Thank God, there are sweeter and closer ties than that—for some men."

The muffled music again began to fill the air about them; the notes of the great organ within the church mingled with



the martial instruments without; and people fell to weeping afresh, sobbing out their grief to one another.

"That was what I meant," Annette continued after a moment's pause, her voice distinct above the music—to his ear at least; "a love closer than any other tie, which makes all other joy and sorrow seem as nothing."

"Annette," said Henri, looking down upon her with a faint smile playing about his lips, "such a love as that does not come to one lightly or often; it is given of God. When it enters into the life of a man he recognizes its face."

"O Henri," she said, half sobbing now, "don't I know it, have I not felt it, to my grief and sorrow?"

"Then God pity you, Annette!" he answered, turning away.

But she stayed him with her hand upon his arm, calling his name softly.

"It is *you* who should pity me, Henri," she said.

"And that I do with all my heart," he answered sadly. "Let us cease talking of this, Annette, and show more reverence for the dead."

"Ah, I know," she interrupted bitterly. "You too understand what this love is beyond a union of brothers. A man's heart is never so hard when it is empty, Henri."

"Annette," he answered coldly, "that is not to the purpose; if this is all you have to say, I must go."

"Ah! tell me," she pleaded, holding his arm. "I promise to put aside myself and feel for you; a woman can do such things as that. You might give me this small comfort, to tell me the name of the woman who is happier than I."

Could he indeed? What right had he to take that sweetest name of woman—which he only spoke in his own heart as an inspiration, as those about him spoke the names of their patron saints—how could he turn it to a common countersign, to be passed from mouth to mouth, like the name of any other woman whom he knew? For the matter of that, what right had he to



hold it in his heart at all, except that inalienable right which is given of nature and God?

"Who is she, Henri, and I will be a sister to her?" Annette was still pleading.

The muffled drums still sounded, and the notes of the organ reached them from within. Annette's eyes were cast reverently to the ground, and Henri stood with his head uncovered.

"Annette," he said in quiet tones, but not very patient ones, "this is folly. You do not really care for me—for one who has been like your brother. Forget this idle fancy, and for the rest—these things are sacred—there may be times when God must be one's only confidant."

"Ah! I know," she answered vehemently, her eyes still cast upon the ground. "You have set your heart so high that you dare not tell me."

"No one's heart can be set higher than upon God," he answered calmly. "And even if you say the truth, there are things which one *dare* not do, and yet not be a coward. No man is accounted a coward who dare not sin against God. Annette, there may be lesser things which even a brave man dare not do. I will not submit to further questioning. I hope your head will soon be well. And if your heart is really in trouble, may God give you rest for that!"

He took her hand for a moment in his own. If it had not been for the time and place he might have raised it to his lips. A man with a tender heart will give this much of tribute to a wasted love. A man with a true heart will feel humbled, as this man did, at the humiliation of the woman who loves him. And so, though honestly believing that he had never given Annette occasion for her love, Henri felt that he had become less worthy because she had rendered it to him; as if, being a true knight, his colours had been dragged a little in the dust, and he had become accountable in God's sight for trouble which had come through him.

Annette had had a strong belief that if once she could humble



herself so far as to let Henri see into her heart, she would meet with her reward. He might not love her very dearly, but he would not be able to resist her tears. Now, alas! he had both seen and resisted them. With a strange hardness of heart, for which there could be but one accounting, he had held her from him. And was she, Annette, nourishing a viper in her bosom—giving her tenderness and care to the woman who sat in her place?

As the shadows fell the crowd came thronging out of the church and joined themselves to the throng without. Annette allowed herself to be swept forward, turning wearily toward the palace gates. For the past few months her manner toward the Lady Marguerite had undergone a change. Annette was human, and she knew her power. Everything was changing now, and the people were on the throne. Since that winter day when the royalists had come to grief on account of their hidden dirks, and had been ignominiously kicked down the palace stairs by the boots of the National Guard, Annette had laughed in her sleeve.

Though, surely, her nature had its gentle charities. On that very day of popular triumph, while she watched from an upper window, she had seen M. de Nesle bravely defending himself against some desperate odds—covered with mud and with the insults of the crowd. And when he retreated through a private door into the palace, she had slipped down to meet him without the shadow of a smile upon her face, had brushed the mud from his clothing, and had led him to her lady, sorrowing in her heart over his dismay. To be sure, she so far forgot her reverence for M. de Nesle as to ask the Lady Marguerite demurely, on that very evening, if it were not almost as well to have a peasant lover on the winning side as a noble *chevalier* who could be kicked downstairs by a National Guard. She had presumed to say many things which it was not pleasant for Marguerite to hear, but she always said them in a merry fashion, so that they might be taken as a jest. And after all, should not such a lover of the king as the Lady Marguerite submit to insult for his sake?



"Was it a grand *fête*, Annette?" she asked that evening; "and were you satisfied?"

"Ah! madame mocks," said Annette. "Surely one could not be happy at such a sorrow. Monsieur Mirabeau was a great man."

"That is true," said Marguerite gently; "but even great men have to die, Annette. Kings as well as the poorest go when God calls them."

"Ay," said Annette with an innocent air, "and sometimes they go sooner. Was there not a king in England, madame—some Jacques or Edouard—whom the people put to death by taking off his head? Ah, *bah!* but they were ingrates those to harm the king. But England is far away, is it not, madame, and the people are not so well taught as we in *la belle France*? And yet there were Henri III. and Henri IV., who both were sent before their time. It is such a terrible thing, madame, for a king to go before God calls."

"Annette, you are a heathen," said Marguerite shortly. "No man ever goes before God calls him."

"Ay," said Annette, "but evil men may help the thing along. I have heard it whispered, madame, that even Monsieur Mirabeau was helped by a little poison. But who would harm such a man as that? Not the people, who were all weeping together; and surely not the king, who has such a kind heart."

"Annette," said Marguerite, "you must not listen to tales. It was Monsieur Mirabeau's time to die; that is all."

"Ay," Annette replied, with a wise toss of her head; "and yet, madame, there may have been men in more haste to speed him than the good saints were to receive him."

"Then *God* will judge and punish them, Annette."

"Ah! well," said the maid a little wistfully, "it was a grand funeral—such music, madame, and such a brave procession! Not even Saint Louis of blessed memory could have had more honour. So grand it is to be a friend of the people."

Marguerite sighed; she had the thought of the psalmist in her heart though she missed the words,—"When he dieth



he shall carry nothing away ; his glory shall not descend after him."

"Madame is sad," said Annette, who was leisurely braiding her lady's long hair.

"Death is sad, Annette," said her mistress gently ; "the thought of death comes to me very often now in these uncertain times."

"Madame is not well," said Annette, "that is all. I wonder if it is also the thought of death that weighs on my cousin Henri's mind ? Poor fellow ! he is very sad."

The firelight was burning low, and the candles gave an uncertain light. Still, if any sudden colour had flushed Marguerite's face, doubtless Annette, bending forward to stir the embers, would not have missed it.

But Marguerite replied without the hesitation of a moment, "Henri Beaupré is not afraid of death, Annette. Faith like his is a good thing for one to have—faith and love."

"Ah, I have no doubt madame understands it all," said Annette. "If faith is a comfort to Henri, it may be that *love* torments him ; perhaps he is in love."

"In love !" Marguerite repeated wearily. "I meant love to God, Annette—to the Lord Jesus. Do you think, Annette, if one loved the Lord with all one's heart one could ever be sad ?"

"I don't know, madame," said the young woman demurely ; she was growing used of late to such moods as this in her lady. "I have always supposed the saints and martyrs were very miserable. Madame will be gayer to-morrow ; as for Henri, I am quite sure he is in love."

"Then if he is in love, Annette," said Marguerite, "doubtless it is with thee."

"Ah, madame," said Annette, flirting a tear away ; "if you would say a kind word for me."

She fancied she saw a faint wave of colour flush Marguerite's soft cheek for a moment ; was it fancy only ?

"Do you love him, Annette ?"



"Madame knows I love him well."

"I am afraid my words would weigh lightly; but if it will make you happier—yes, Annette, I will speak for you."

"Ay," said Annette softly to herself; "and then it may be that Henri, waxing bold and forgetting all barriers, may speak a word for himself, and, *voilà*! that is an end of his visions. If my haughty lady heard such words as those from *canaille* lips, she would scath him with her wrath, though her own heart answered him a hundred times. And no man's love will outlive a woman's scorn."

While Annette communed with her heart in this fashion, she sighed deeply and dried a few invisible tears. Her lady smiled at this.

"It is doleful bliss to be in love, is it not, Annette?" she said. "Some one has called it 'such sweet pain.'"

Annette frowned darkly, and knitted her pretty eyebrows, but her face was turned away. "Perhaps some day madame may prove it to her cost," was her inward commentary.

"If such pain is sweet," Marguerite continued, "it is I who should sigh, because I am not in love."

"Ah! but, madame, M. le Marquis!" cried Annette.

Marguerite threw back her head with an air of dignity.

"In France love is not essential to marriage, Annette," she said. "A kind respect will blossom into love."

"Ah! then madame *will* love in due time, and she will know," said Annette, with the innocent air of a child.

It was growing late, and Marguerite dismissed Annette, promising with a smile to remember her request. But tired as she was, she sat pondering for a long hour alone upon this very promise which she had made. She had taken a strange office upon herself, that of pleading a woman's cause with an unloving lover. In any case this would not have been easy, but there was a quiet dignity about this man of the people which made the task seem heavier than she could choose. Might he not, all the while, be laughing at her while she spoke? And this, she



agreed at last, was what made the matter so distasteful to her—one does not like to be laughed at. Besides, even a man of the people might not care to have an unwelcome sweetheart thrust upon him, though by hands as gentle as her own. Men in such stirring times as these cared little for such white hands as hers—the hands of an aristocrat. They spoke too plainly of “bread of idleness.”

If it had only been some other man—some rough, ungainly fellow! And suddenly, as she mused, she caught herself in a half-formed wish that she too could be for a few days a girl of the people, were it only to prove how easily she could bring this obdurate fellow to her feet. With the thought, which was a fleeting one, a soft flush stole over her face in which the marquis had no share. “The spirit of the times has bewitched me!” she cried half-laughing; and almost with the words upon her lips she fell asleep.



XX.

*"SOWING THE WIND."*

MANON WRITES.

*April 1791.*

THE spring time has come again, and the crocuses are springing in the parks and in the palace gardens. It makes one long for the sweet scents of meadows and hedgerows; to be a flower even, if flowers but had souls. It would be well "to take no thought" for eating or drinking or being clothed. My little Félice, who is as sweet as a flower, had such a meagre crust for her breakfast this morning, and such a thin cup of soup for her dinner. Like a flower, too, that has no air and sunshine, she fades from day to day. It is hard to see a little child wasting, and to know that only food is lacking to its life. But Félice is like her mother: she smiles in a mysterious way, and takes her portion with a sweet contentment. Sometimes she tries with coaxing words to feed me with spoonfuls of her own thin broth; and again she asks me wistfully why there is so little for me to eat. And only yesterday she said, in her quaint fashion, "If there is not food enough for all, Manon, perhaps the good God will take some of us to heaven. Mamma is not hungry now."

And I cannot make it clear to her that it is not God who withholds the food, but men—the aristocrats, who are speculating in the lives of the people; but her words reminded me of the dear Lord's love for such as she. In the Father's house there is always "bread enough and to spare." When we can-



not feed her any longer, he will take her to her mother. And then I hope he will take me too, for it is better to be at rest.

This beautiful Easter Sunday, when one's thoughts should be full of holy things, mine have been filled with forebodings. Whether France is free or no, seems to make so little difference.

I have sometimes thought of late that even in the old times there never was more misery than now—never were bread and work so scarce.

To be sure, M. Danton, who procured my father the work upon the palace, has also found him quite a little to do, now and then, about the Salle de Manège. Work is bread, and I try not to be ungrateful, yet I cannot like M. Danton. I think he must be lacking in honour, for I heard my father saying once to Jacques that Danton had taken bribes from the queen to pay him for aiding the king's cause in the Assembly. He takes the money and laughs, but he never helps the cause, nor have they any sorer enemy than he.

Of course I have no desire that the queen should thrive in her devices; a woman with more schemes, or with a head more apt at contriving mischief, was surely never born. She can forego her sleep and pass through days of toil to compass the ruin of the nation. Yet, all the same, I like still less the man who could take her money in order to work her ill.

When I spoke of all my fears this morning, Jacques answered me gently, "The times will be well enough, Manon. Let Madame Veto be but once suppressed, and the Golden Age will dawn."

But my father rejoined savagely, "How can there be any public confidence with a king for ever at child's play—hunting deer, or drawing charts, or making locks; and between whiles seizing every offer of those who would help him away, to make war upon his people?"

"But the king is really a prisoner," I said, "if he may not leave the palace?"



My father laughed, and Jacques replied that the king would certainly discover that if he tried to escape. "Kings are obsolete now," he said; "in the Golden Age one has no need of them."

"In the Golden Ages, father," I asked, "do not the people have bread? or do equality and brotherly kindness clothe and feed them?"

"No revolution can move fast enough for a woman," said my father. "The poor Manon is hungry."

They had seated themselves in our small living-room—M. Foucher and my father—while I was moving here and there to prepare our noon-day meal. Just as my father said those words Annette appeared suddenly in the doorway. She seems to go and come quite freely in these days. She laughs often; but her brow is darker than it was, and a strain of bitterness runs like an undertone through all her merriment.

"What is that, my good uncle?" she said, nodding pleasantly, while she untied a package of buns for the child; "what is this about women and revolutions? The revolution is going very well for me; and while the queen mars her own plans so charmingly, we have nothing to fear. She makes her preparations so that all the world knows of them."

"Oh yes," Jacques said laughing; "the world knows quite well what passes at the Tuileries."

"We cast down our eyes and pretend to be blind, that is all," said Annette.

"You had a lively time a few days ago," said Jacques.

"Ay, the people showed a fine spirit," said my father. "If a man will be a king, let him keep to his kingdom. If he had once gone to St. Cloud, my Lady Jezebel would have soon had him over the border."

"You should have seen her harangue the crowd from the carriage," cried Annette. "Her graces and her gentle words, and that haughty toss of her head, availed her nothing. I saw it all, and could have laughed well, but that my lady was with me, weeping and tearing her hair. 'The king was so insulted,'



said she. Ah, *bah!* is the king better than any other nice fat papa, that he should not be insulted? say I."

"O Annette," I cried, "you did not surely say it to the Lady Marguerite!"

And then Jacques laughed; but my father answered with some severity,—

"A woman who has favourites among the aristocrats is no worthy patriot, my daughter."

I said that the Lady Marguerite had been very kind to me. I could not add what was also in my mind, that for Henri's sake she had acquired in my eyes a sort of sacredness.

"What kindness has she ever done you," said Annette, "save it be kindness to take your work and give you scanty wages for it?"

"Methinks, Mistress Annette," said Jacques, "that thou art somewhat hard upon thy lady."

"I am wearied of her," answered Annette shortly.

While they talked away about the constitution and the Assembly, and railed against a changeful king who swore to do a thing to-day, and swore against it to-morrow, I let my thoughts wander from them. Presently I heard Jacques say,—

"Marat is right, dullard as he is: we want some sharp surgical work to heal the nation's sores. His hundred men with their muffs and their dirks would soon have settled the question."

Now I never could love my country with such tenderness, or feel such hatred towards her enemies, as to think calmly of such deeds of darkness. I know that kings and queens for many years have taken heads without the counting; I know that the life of a man of the people has been like the life of a dog; I have heard of such horrible things that my blood runs cold to remember them. They say that the great lords in the provinces, when they returned chill and tired from the chase, had a right to kill two of their vassals, that they might warm their lordly feet in the bowels of those wretched men! It is memories such as these that goad the people on. But I know God has counted



every fallen head, and all the lives were precious in his sight. For me, I seem wearied of everything since Lucile is gone, and even the sun shines strangely.

And those words of Jacques seemed to strike me like a blow. I recalled vividly, and in a moment, the last conversation I had had with Henri in that very room. It was after the king had been hindered from going to St. Cloud, and I asked Henri what would be the end of all.

"I hope the next thing will be," he said, "that the king will sign the constitution, and that all will go well again." And when I asked whether he thought the king could ever go away and bring down foreign troops upon us, he replied in low tones, "The people have gone too far; they have tasted blood. For my own part, I wish both king and queen were well out of the country.—And, Manon," he added, "tell me, do you care for that fellow Foucher?"

"O Henri!" I cried, ready to weep, "I must have cared for him, or I would never have promised, you know."

"You are too tender-hearted for him, *petite*," said my brother; "he is a cruel fellow. It is such as he who keep Paris in a tumult—turbulent, hot-headed *scélérats*."

"O Henri!" I cried reproachfully, "you said nothing of all this a year ago."

Henri sighed. "I knew nothing of it all a year ago," he said; "you kept your own counsel, Manon. I wish you could change your mind, though I know a woman's love will work marvels with a man."

"Henri," I answered, "since I have learned to love him, I cannot help it, you know."

"No," he answered sadly, "you cannot; and you would not if you could."

But at Jacques' bloodthirsty words I seemed to see him for a moment with Henri's eyes. I shivered, and felt a strange recoil—a terror at throwing in my lot with those who call for blood. I made no protest; I could not have spoken then before



them all. But that afternoon, when Annette had gone, and I had hushed Félice for her daily nap, I went downstairs and found Jacques waiting for me by the little front window. He had been waiting some time, and I hoped his thoughts had done him good. As I crossed to the window he held out his hand and drew me down beside him. We neither of us spoke for a time, but I let my hand rest quietly in his, thinking what it was best to say. My heart was heavy, less for the sake of aristocrats who were in danger than for Jacques's sake, whose heart was so hard toward them. The distant tolling of a bell made me tremble; even the silence of the Sabbath seemed ominous of evil.

"That is the bell of St. Etienne, I think," said Jacques, observing that I trembled. "It must be tolling for a death."

"Jacques," I said then, letting my hand cling more closely to his, "don't you think that death is very sad?"

"Why, yes, Manon," he answered with some surprise, "when it comes between those who love."

"O Jacques, is it not quite sad enough that it must come to all of us, as God sends it, and in his good time?"

"That is sad enough to you and me, Manon; that this skeleton should stalk between our faithful hearts some time in after years, is terrible enough. Let us not think of it, *mon amie*; we are young, and life is good, and death may be very far away."

"But," I insisted, "we are not the only ones who love each other. There are husbands and wives, and lovers too, who are just as true as we—even aristocrats, Jacques. If God sends death it is sad enough, but if man sends it that is terrible."

"When man deals death," he answered sternly, "it is often *God's* justice, Manon, for expiation of crime. There are some crimes which can only be atoned for with blood."

"Such as what, Jacques?" I asked fearfully.

His eyes flashed with indignation, and his face grew so dark that I think for the moment he must have forgotten that I was



sitting beside him. "Such crimes as filled that accursed Bastille with its victims," he said; "such crimes as make gain through speculation in the bread of the hungry."

"The Bastille is gone, Jacques," I pleaded, "and those who made worst use of it have also gone to render their account to God."

"The king and the nobles have no longer *power* to hang starving rebels on 'gallows forty feet high,'" he answered; "but all the same the will is not wanting."

"Jacques," I cried half-sobbing, "you are changed since a year ago."

"Manon," he answered me, "where *you* are concerned I am not changed."

"But you really desire the death of the king and the queen," I cried. "How could you dare to have the stain upon your hands?"

"I consider not myself," replied Jacques. "I am a unit, and all my thoughts are for the nation. For her sake I could welcome shame and ignominy. What are a few blood stains, Manon, compared with what has been? Look back over the rivers of blood that have flowed through France; think of that which ran through this city in one horrible night, when the sound of the church bells kept time to the thrusts of daggers striking in the dark."

"Jacques, those were God's holy martyrs who perished then. *He* remembers; and you, who do not even confess to any love for God, can never make yourself acceptable in his sight by taking his vengeance to yourself."

"It is the vengeance of the people against the kings," said Jacques hotly. "It was a son of Saint Louis, of the blood of your own anointed king, who fired the signal for the murder of those 'holy martyrs,' Manon, and shot his own people down like dogs."

"And, Jacques, it was the *noblest* blood of the land that was shed."



"Oh, well, I only mentioned that as an instance," said Jacques lightly, "and you listen with tears. Take comfort, Manon. No blood is being shed ; my hands are quite as free of stain as yours, my little one. This is a tender-hearted people, and it loves its king."

"O Jacques ! for my sake," I cried, "do not speak again as you did to-day."

"For your sake I will do anything," he answered, "if you will only shorten the time, Manon."

"In such days as these there is no cause that we should make even a show of rejoicing," I answered sadly.

"Every one rejoices," he replied ; "other Frenchwomen are happy. Every night there is dancing and laughter in the gardens of the Palais Royal. We will not call it a festivity, but rather a sacrament—a solemn league between you and me that we together will do more for France than each apart could do."

"I will do anything for France," said I, "if she will only keep her hands clean. And, Jacques, on the day that the king signs the constitution I will be wedded, if you choose."

Jacques swore to hold me to that promise. He declared, moreover, that our vows would hold much better than the king's signature, and lead to a happier ending.

And this is the one result of all my efforts to reason with Jacques. When I am alone and think how much he loves me, it seems quite possible that I should bend him, just a little, toward what is true and best. Yet when I come to prove my power, his will is always stronger than mine.

*June 1.*

Yesterday I saw the queen—so close that I touched her robe. I have often seen her at a distance before in grand processions, sitting with haughty dignity, and smiling but faintly even at the applause of the people. Lately, when the people have ceased to applaud even the king, she has not smiled at all. I have thought her hard-hearted and unforgiving for this, and



wondered that she could be so full of malice while her face remains so gentle.

Since yesterday I have wondered over many other things, and my wonder has held me silent. I think that if my father could have caught the smile she gave me, he would never call her "my Lady Jezebel" again.

She was walking in the garden of the palace, and a hard, bold-looking woman had barred the way, and was heaping insults upon her. Her majesty had the little dauphin by the hand, and one of her ladies beside her. The woman accused her of being a foreigner, and of seeking to ruin France. "Nay, you mistake," said the queen gently, "if you think that I am not a Frenchwoman. I have even forgotten my mother-tongue. France is my own country, and I was happy while the French loved me."

I am sure she meant what she said, for there were tears standing in her eyes. Even that bold woman began to sob, and I, who stood close by with my little Félice, sobbed in company.

Just then the little dauphin spied Félice, and smiled at her, and Félice held out her small arms to him and laughed gleefully. The queen was not angry. She laid her hand on the head of my little girl, and looked down at her with a look such as mothers give to their babies.

"Is she thine own, little woman?" she said to me. "Thou art young to be a mother."

"She was my sister's, your majesty," I answered, "and my sister is dead."

"Ah, the poor little one!" said the queen; "so small and pale, and without a mother. You must be a mother to her, my child."

"I will do all I can," I answered. "She is pale, your majesty, because she is so often hungry."

The queen's eyes filled with tears once more, and she said gently, stooping to kiss Félice, "Alas, my child! the times are



no better than they used to be when the king cared for you. We all suffer together. I would to God we could feed you all!"

She slipped a piece of gold in my hand; and when I would have returned it, being too proud to receive alms from even the queen herself, she said, "It is not for you, my child; it is for the little one without a mother. And when you use it, think kindly of your queen, whose little ones also are hungry—for sunshine and freedom."

When she turned away I fell on a seat and wept. I could scarcely control the desire that I felt to throw myself at her feet, and beg her to forgive me for all the evil thoughts I had ever had of her in all my life—that poor, unhappy mother! And it seems to me a sad and miserable thing that the nation cannot be free itself without causing the sorrow of its king.

When I raised my head she was gone. Two or three guards in the national uniform stood gazing at me, as though I were some strange sight well worth the seeing. But they were not laughing. Indeed, if they had seen what passed it had not occurred to them to treat it as a jest.

I took the hand of Félice and turned homeward. It seemed as if everything had been overthrown for me—as if that bit of gold in my hand had been a fairy talisman to change the hue of all things.



## XXI

### *A FORETASTE OF TERROR.*

MARGUERITE WRITES.

*July 1791.*

FOR many days my heart has been so heavy that I have had no will to write upon my sorrows. Even though I were fifty times a prisoner myself, seeing God's dear sunlight through iron bars, yet if their majesties were but free I could write exultingly of their deliverance. But now the palace is a prison for us all, and we are barred in by sad forebodings.

If there had been but a dozen true men in all France, even these might at the utmost have saved the king. But De Bouillés, and Fersens, and Ste. Maries, do not grow upon every green tree. I am growing dimly to see that in order to be loyal and brave it is not needful only to be noble by a long line of ancestors and to hold a stately title. One must also be a nobleman of God's making, and his title must be stamped upon his soul. You can count such men without a rosary, and have no trouble to remember them in your prayers.

A few days before the time appointed for flight, it was found that there were some little matters neglected in regard to her majesty's wardrobe—some stitches which could be taken more safely at a distance. I spoke at once of Manon; but my lady feared that at such a time even her coming to the palace might arouse suspicion. So for the sake of her dear majesty, and of my own strong desire to see Manon's face, I resolved myself to be the messenger.



Yet my heart failed me more than once. The streets are beset with evil faces in these days, and no woman with the air of an aristocrat can pass unnoticed. As Annette was missing I threw a simple black cloak of hers about my shoulders, which hid the small tapestry bag in which I carried her majesty's *lingerie*. The morning was very soft and beautiful—a morning to tempt any one, king or peasant, to flight, and I felt happy like a child to be at liberty. Some little distance from the palace I spied a hackney-coach and beckoned to the driver; but being over-busy in keeping my own veil in place, I took no notice of the man, saving that his hat was pulled well down above his eyes.

I gave him the number of the little house in the Rue Tonnerrie where Manon lived when last I heard of her, and we drove slowly through the crowd of vehicles and the narrow ill-savoured streets. There seemed an air of idleness abroad, little being done of anything that was worth the doing. A great number of municipal guards stood about at the corners, for no purpose apparently, although I saw many wretched men who looked as though they might need restraint. The crowd increased as we approached Manon's home: a dead horse was lying in the street, I think, and I felt tempted even then to turn back and forego my mission. But seeing no cause that any should regard me, I summoned a brave heart, and mounted the low wooden steps.

It may have been a fancy born of my fears, but it seemed that the murmur of voices was hushed somewhat at my appearance. And truly, though I was filled with great fear, yet every feeling of terror vanished when Henri Beaupré opened the door, and I felt like a stray child who has found a protector near.

"Monsieur Beaupré," I said hurriedly, when he had closed the door, "I have an errand with Manon which no one else could undertake. I want to see her for five minutes alone."

He had led me into a little room beside the entrance hall, and I had seated myself upon a wooden chair which stood near



the window. Through the half-closed shutters I could see that a little group of people had gathered about my coach and were putting questions to the driver. He answered them in a sort of idle fashion, but readily enough, shrugging his shoulders and laughing between his words.

"Lady Marguerite," said Henri, following me to the window, "before I call Manon, may I speak a word to you?"

"Ah, sweet Sainte Marguerite!" I cried, quite disregarding what he asked. For at that moment the man upon my coach pushed back the hat from his forehead; and without thinking of what might follow, I turned toward Henri Beaupré and begged him for the love of Heaven to send the coach away. He did not need twice bidding, this *bourgeois* cavalier, or any telling of reasons. In a moment I could see him from my window handing the man his fare and bidding him drive off. In the instant hush of the crowd I could distinctly hear his words: "the lady had no further need of him, and desired that he should not wait." His voice was determined. I saw that he recognized the man, and knew with whom he had to deal.

But the fellow shook his head and refused to go unless the lady herself should discharge him. The crowd roundly applauded; there were low muttered words, such as "Liberty," "Fraternity," and "Equal rights for all." "Citizens," cried Henri in a ringing voice, "shall a *citoyenne* of Paris be compelled then to ride against her pleasure?" And some voices cried, "No, no," from which it seems that even *citoyennes* may have their due.

The driver became furious, and began to swear at Henri and the crowd. "I know the lady," he said; "I have seen her before. I have seen you also, monsieur. Let her come and dismiss me herself, the proud aristocrat.—Citizens, I swear that she is an aristocrat. Therefore this gentleman must be also an aristocrat."

An angry murmur arose from the crowd, which had rapidly increased. I saw that the matter might even be full of actual



danger to us both. But this very thought aroused my courage, and as the crowd were crying loudly, "Let her come out then, it is quite just, and settle with this worthy fellow herself, monsieur," I rose to do their bidding. I heard Henri's answer: "She is under my roof, and I will answer for her. You know me for a patriot, and you are too good patriots yourselves to hunt for women." And then, in a blind, bewildered way, I groped toward the door, going as if some voice had called me, and as one who is in danger seeks to face the worst. I remember that something in my heart kept saying to me, "You are a De Clairac: were the De Clairacs ever cowards?" And I knew that I should stand debased for ever in my own eyes, if I let this champion of mine come so foolishly to grief for sake of me.

As he made that appeal to their patriotism the crowd turned suddenly upon him, half menacing, half in applause, and he stood facing them as calmly as though the whole matter were of no account, and yet with defiance too, daring them to do their worst. I could not help the fancy that the danger was somewhat to his liking. But when he turned and saw me stand beside him, there was a look in his eyes as they met mine which was neither calm nor defiant, and which had well-nigh destroyed what small courage I could summon.

"*Citoyens*," I said, but my voice was not over-bold, "I thank you for your kind concern. The gentleman is right; I do not wish the carriage any longer."

The effort must have been beyond my strength, for I grew dizzy after I had spoken. I remember vaguely now that there were some mutterings of discontent, some insolent words about my white hands and the rings upon them. I had also a dim impression that I had been foolish in removing my gloves. The driver swore, I think, that there was some queen's plot brewing; that if he went he should certainly return. At this Henri sprang forward and seized the horse by the head. "Citizens," cried he, "will you stand calmly by and see a



Frenchwoman insulted? In the name of liberty, bid him ride on, and let people drive or not as they choose."

There was much murmuring, for the cry of "queen's plot" had aroused the people. But some cried, "Ay, ay; let him drive on, if the lady wills it."

So the uniform of the National Guard, and the courage in Henri Beaupré's eye, even more than the blow which he dealt the horse, prevailed in the end. For the coward on the box and the cowardly crowd about him seemed for a moment subdued, although the man muttered his old threat of returning, and the rabble did not cease to guard the house for him.

"Alas," said Henri, as he closed the door and confronted me, "that *you* should have fallen into such hands as those, *madame!*"

I think there was more in his mind to say—other words which halted on his tongue. Perhaps if I had been a maiden of the people he would have said them easily.

"Monsieur Beaupré," I said to him, "I have always to thank you for putting yourself between me and danger. I think you are my good angel—or my *preux chevalier*," I added with a little laugh.

"You yourself are no coward in braving danger, Lady Marguerite," he said.

"But I *am* a coward at heart," I answered; "and yet I have the blood of a race of soldiers, monsieur."

His colour rose at this. "And I also, Lady Marguerite," he answered. "But yours is the blood of those who commanded, mine of those who obeyed. I bow to that fact, madame; I am your servant."

And then speaking quickly, he began to warn me that the preparations for the king's flight had been discovered, and that it would be better for his majesty not to make the attempt at all than, having made it, to fail.

"Ah! then Monsieur Beaupré," I cried, "pray call your sister, that I may return at once."



But he stayed my impatience. "In half-an-hour," he said, "the light will begin to fade, and then I will take you out by another door in order to avoid the crowd, and so through a narrow court-yard to a side street."

But though I saw that there was wisdom in his plan, I felt troubled at the necessity of choosing it. The more I am resolved to avoid this man, the more continually am I thrown in his company. To put myself under such a weight of gratitude to one so far beneath me is shame enough, but it is more bitter cause for self-reproach that when I am with him I forget so readily the gulf between us. May sweet Sainte Marguerite guard me well from ever seeing him again!

It was for reasons such as these that while I sat waiting for Manon I resolved in myself to make a speedy end of sentiment, as far as M. Beaupré was concerned, by giving myself at once and heartily to the cause of Annette.

I had no sooner reached this good resolve than Manon herself appeared, paler than when I had seen her last, but with softer lines about her mouth and a sweeter smile. She was sadder too, as though her hopes had been dying one by one and she had buried them.

"Why, my dear little maid," I cried, holding out both my hands to greet her, "I have longed often and often for one of your neat little sermons."

Manon took my hand and raised it to her lips, but she still stood mutely with her eyes downcast and with tears upon her lashes.

"O Manon, have you learned to hate me?" said I.

"Nay, dear lady," said Manon gently; and as she spoke she drew a low wooden stool a little nearer, and seated herself so that she could look up in my face, while the tears rolled softly down her own. I told her of my errand, drying her eyes with my own kerchief as I did so; and Manon said she would be glad indeed to do anything to make more money to buy bread.



"And do you really want for bread, Manon?" I asked.

"My father has very little work," she said; "and though Henri gives us all he has, we cannot *feast* upon it. But it is a blessed thing to suffer in the cause of freedom, dear lady."

"Why, sweet Sainte Marguerite!" said I, ignoring the disloyal ending of her speech—"why have you never brought your troubles to me, Manon?"

"My father will not take alms," she answered proudly.

"And I'll warrant *you* are just as proud as he," I replied with some indignation. "Does the religion of your Church, Manon, forbid you to receive the kindness of a friend?"

"I am not proud," she answered gently. "I should not dare be proud, lest in the words of Holy Writ my God might also 'resist' me. But I have to do my father's pleasure."

"Since your religion is not at fault, Manon," I said, "what does it counsel you about the deeds which are doing now—all over the land?"

"My religion," she answered gravely, "has had nothing to do with that."

"Ah, Manon, Manon!" I insisted, taking her hands in mine, "can you believe that such a gracious Saviour as yours—a Saviour so kind that you have no need of saint or angel, or even the blessed Mother, to come between your soul and him—takes pleasure in such violence and cruelty? Or when you talk of the cause of freedom as you do, is it because you do not *care* about his pleasure? Tell me, how can one be a patriot in France and a lover of the merciful Jesus?"

At this she grew paler, and drew a little closer to me, speaking in a whisper; and well she might, for the crowd were still about the house, and close under the window.

"I am afraid sometimes, these last few months, that I am not a very ardent patriot, dear lady," she said; "my heart is not so warm as it should be. I do long for my country's good, and above all, that the hungry should be fed; but one can love one's country without thinking well of evil men. Since the



Lord was a poor man, Lady Marguerite, he must feel for the sorrows of the poor."

"Ah, Manon," I said, "is it only the sorrows of the poor that he regards? Will he have no thought for mine because I dwell in a palace?"

"No one ever found his compassions fail in hut or palace," she answered, "who felt their need, lady."

If need must make one's claim, my claim is boundless; if one must trust to merit, why, who has merit in the sight of the holy Lord? Even the sacred monks and hermits, who scourged and tormented their poor bodies, had only the meagre merit of suffering. But all that one can suffer is as nothing to his sufferings. One who has known suffering like his must needs be pitiful. If he feels compassion for the suffering people, he must pity those who are martyred by the people, whether it be by a cruel death or a more cruel living.

But all this I did not say to Manon.

Presently the shadows began to fall. The crowd still lingered, but by trusting myself to Henri Beaupré's guidance I escaped safely. My dark cloak did me good service, and the gathering twilight stood by me like a friend. Henri lingered a little behind, but as we began to approach the palace, going through the Quai du Louvre, I spoke his name, and he instantly stepped to my side.

"Monsieur Beaupré," I said, "it may seem strange to you that I should put my hand to meddle in other love affairs. Nevertheless I have promised to speak a word to you for Annette."

And when I had said this I seemed to find no more to say, as though that were the end of my mission.

The new moon had risen, and the light, though dim, was clear enough for me to see that a cloud passed over his face.

"Do not be angry," I added quickly, "at my interference."

"You could never say anything that would anger me, Lady Marguerite," he said.

And then, anxious that the matter should be brought to a



swift conclusion, and vexed that I found it so hard to proceed, I added quickly,—

“Annette seems fond of you; and it seems to me that a woman’s love should be of some small value to a brave man like you.”

I heard a sound at that moment as though that strong fellow beside me were grinding his teeth. And it occurred to me that the feeling of reluctance which made it so difficult for me to tell my story might be shared by him, making it hard to listen. He answered me presently, but the time was long.

“A woman’s love might be of deathless value,” he said, “if she were the woman I could love again.” He spoke with an effort, and his breath came heavily; and after pausing a moment he added, “I don’t see how the love of any other woman could be of value to any man.”

I looked up at him that moment in some bewilderment, and doing so I encountered his glance, which was fixed steadily upon my face. It seemed as though he were trying to make me understand by the power of his look what an impossible thing I had asked of him. His eyes were so intense that I thought he would see into my heart; and remembering stories which I had heard of those who were bound and tortured and could make no sign, it seemed as though I had been standing in the room of some cursed old inquisitor to torture an innocent man. My soul was smitten with remorse. Reckless as I was, I could see that the love matters of a man like this are things with which a woman dare not meddle.

While I thought of this, my companion quietly withdrew his eyes and spoke again :—

“I should like to give pleasure to the Lady Marguerite by any act of sacrifice. My life would weigh lightly in the balance with my duty as her knight. But if there were no other woman in the world, I could never consent to marry my cousin Annette; for a marriage against one’s heart would be a bitterer portion than death.”



The restraint which seemed upon us both was so unreasonable that I inwardly chafed against it ; and yet a woman's heart is so hard to fathom, I know not whether I should have been better pleased if he had granted what I asked him.

"Monsieur Beaupré," I said with some dignity, "you have done me more than one good service, and I can do little to show my gratitude ; for although my family have always had great wealth, in these days we are poor."

I hesitated, but he did not speak ; indeed he seemed to be under some strong excitement. It is almost incredible that a man like this could dare to love a woman of noble birth ; yet even that is not so strange as that I—Marguerite de Clairac—should be put to flight before the glance of a grenadier. Love comes unbidden to a man, I suppose, and even in spite of his better reason ; and having a dim prescience of this, I spoke gently, through fear of giving needless pain. It was better to make an end at once ; yet never was an end so hard to make.

"Monsieur Beaupré," I said, speaking of set purpose, "if you and I were not so widely separated in every way, I might find it an easier matter to show my gratitude ; there would be so many ways in such a case. I want to say now, if there is any other woman—as there might be—whom you *could* love, I will give her a fair dowry, and will be her friend. I will do all that I can to make your love a triumph."

"Will you do *that* ?" he cried, turning suddenly upon me. "O my God, if she only could !"

And then there seemed nothing that I could say in return, and the silence was very full. It was he who broke it after a moment.

"Lady Marguerite," he said, "my love is not a tangible thing, though it is quite true that I have visions and feverish fancies, like other men. Sometimes there is a great gulf fixed between ourselves and some desired blessing which the best wishes of our friends can never bridge. Pray for the lady of



my dreams, that God may shield her : that is the most you can do for me."

An impulse of sympathy overcame me. He seemed strong enough to fight his sorrow, yet the sorrow, whatever it might be, remained ; and if I guessed even dimly what it was, may our sweet Mother forgive me for this that I was neither grieved, except for his sake, nor angry.

Perhaps it was not strange, after such adventures as these, that I should have dreamed of Henri Beaupré that night. But it is strange that a dream should so contradict the true reality. For I dreamed that the lady of Henri Beaupré's vision had in some way spanned the gulf which lay between herself and him. I saw her in his arms ; his kisses were upon her lips ; and I, who viewed them as in a picture, seemed, by some strange contradiction, so at one with that lady of my dream that I felt the kisses, as though they had been real, upon my face, and heard the rapid beating of his heart. I had no sufficient pride of rank or birth ; I seemed to forget that I was any other than a simple girl of the people, like Manon and Annette. They two, the people of my dream, stood in a little narrow garden place, while around them the world was all in flames, and howling mobs and terrible strange sights appeared on every side. Yet the spot where these lovers stood together seemed large enough for paradise, and the woman was not afraid.

But both my dream and my adventure were forgotten in the excitement of the days which came after, when our hearts were so full that we dared not speak lest we should say too much, or be silent lest our silence should tell tales to those who were watching.

I was present when her majesty and the children put on their disguises. One could not well help laughing over it, since the queen herself was so merry. And I stood, a little later, by the window of her ante-room, overlooking the garden, and watched her stroll away in the pretty gipsy hat, and with that perfect air of studied unconcern. Two or three ladies stood



with me, and we all were holding our breath. We had better have been putting up prayers for her safety and our own; but I don't think one of us thought of herself. We are not all, thank God! like Mademoiselle de Tourzel, who had rather endanger the safety of their majesties than be left behind them. There should be no choice to one of noble blood when it comes to giving or doing for the king.

At length we noticed that a grenadier, who stood on guard in the corridor, was eying us curiously through the half-open door. And as we desired, above all things, to keep the king's secret, we quietly separated, one by one, lest any one should marvel. But I—poor unfortunate!—had no time to reach my chamber before I encountered M. d'Arblay at the head of the grand staircase. Now, although I have not seen fit to speak to him of late, yet I could not well refuse him the courtesy of a word when he stood in my very pathway; though it did occur to me that he might be curious at meeting me so late in such a place. However that may be, he only said, with a mocking smile, "It is rarely that one has the pleasure of meeting Mademoiselle de Clairac in these days."

"Since titles are abolished, Monsieur Patriot," said I, "why not finish by calling me Citoyenne Marguerite?"

"That is a name very near my heart," he replied—"a charming title. Where can one find a lovelier name than Marguerite? or a nobler than *citoyenne-patriote*?"

"To my mind, Monsieur d'Arblay," I rejoined, with rising anger, "*citoyenne-patriote* is quite equivalent to *citoyenne-cannibale*."

The cloud gathered on his forehead; his eyes glowered darkly upon me. It may be that, notwithstanding his noble blood, there is something savage also in him as well as in the people.

"Marguerite," he went on, speaking in a low tone, "I know there is trouble brewing—some mischief is in the wind."

"There is always trouble in the wind," I answered him, "ever since the nation has been free. When there are not



châteaux to burn and women to torture, there are men to be hung to the *lanterne*."

"Well, if that were true," he answered bitterly, "even the liberty of killing is better than the liberty of *being killed*, which the nation has enjoyed so long. Lady Marguerite, if you know anything concerning the king's plans for flight, I conjure you, for the sake of the true interests of the king, to tell me now! The throne itself will be overturned if he should fail, and failure is assured. One little word from you may save both king and queen."

"If I am to serve my king by little words," I answered, "I should rather *choose* them, Monsieur d'Arblay. I am a person of small importance in the court, and therefore not likely to be acquaint with secrets. But even were I trusted with the knowledge of some mischievous design, as you are pleased to fancy, I have never had the same drawing as yourself, monsieur, toward the calling of a traitor. If such things as *little words* are so potent to save the king, I marvel greatly that some of his friends should not have tried them sooner."

M. d'Arblay flashed lightning from his eyes upon me, but I bore it. "Was there ever a woman as gentle as you who was so savage with her tongue?" he answered angrily. "I wonder greatly, madame, that any man should waste his love upon your beautiful face who knows the venom of your heart. For myself, if I were able, I would tear such an accursed love from my soul."

"Try it, Monsieur d'Arblay," I answered. "Perhaps you will find it more easy than you fancy, except perhaps that all venomous creatures leave their sting. But be sure of this: no love is worth the harbouring which is merely love of a *face*; for faces fade, and grow old, and lose their charm, but hearts live on for ever."

That was toward the early hours of morning, and the palace was very quiet as I went softly up to my room. I remember well it was not long before the dawn crept in at my window,



for I lay waking until the morning. At intervals I strained my ears to listen for the rushing of the mob, which I counted well on hearing so soon as the news of the escape should spread abroad. And meanwhile I followed in my mind the dear travellers on their journey, hoping even against hope that they were thus far, and thus, and thus, and that everything went well.

At last my miserable vigil came to a close, and the yet more miserable day began. It was on that day, I think, that I first learned the real meaning of prayer and the blessedness of going with a burden straight to the dear Lord himself. I don't remember that I prayed for any special thing, not even for the safety of the queen, for my heart was far too full to shape my thoughts in words.

I went to the Lord, as a little child goes to its mother and lays its head on her bosom, and I said, "Lord, the suspense and the humiliation are more than I can bear;" and he sent peace into my soul.

If we drink of the Lord's cup, we learn to feel his brotherhood with us. It may be I shall learn from himself what I should not have learned from many teachers.

No sooner did Annette hear of the king's flight than she appeared in my chamber, and seated herself with much familiarity on the bed beside me.

"Madame knows, doubtless," she said, "that their gracious majesties have run away? They will find it all the worse, alas! when it comes to returning. The people are so hard when one does not trust them. Indeed, madame, they have excellent example for severity. Does madame recall what the Capets were wont to do to prisoners who escaped them and were taken?"

"Annette," I said with displeasure, which I could not well forbear, but gently still, "you have received only kindness at my hands, and you have therefore no cause to insult me."

"*Pardonne*, madame," she answered, in a voice which was



more displeasing for its softness, "there are some wise people who say that, since the king has flown, every good patriot has cause to insult an aristocrat."

"Annette," I said coldly, "I did not know that you were so ungrateful or had so black a heart."

"That may be," she answered, laughing softly. "It is not easy to discover the colour of a heart; and it may well be, madame, that no one will be curious about mine. It is aristocrat hearts—red as madame's—which are carried in the gaze of the people now and then. *Pardonne*, madame, if I offend; this is the justice of the nation."

I shuddered; and again she begged my pardon, although I am sure she was well pleased at the horror in my face.

"Annette," I said, "is it really true that you can exult at such shameful deeds?"

"It is the aristocrats who exult in suffering," she replied; "it is they who have driven the people mad."

I was angered past endurance, and rising on my elbow, I said to Annette, "That is enough. Will you oblige me to summon the guard, or will you leave me in peace?"

Annette laughed merrily. "I am quite harmless, madame," she said. "See my hands—as soft as yours; and my heart, though black, is only a *woman's* heart. Besides, the time is past now when my Lady de Clairac can order men to be put out of the grand gallery, or even women from her bed-chamber. It is the people who rule. *Pardonne*, madame, but one must learn unpleasant truths in these years of the blessed revolution."

I felt my weakness; but being unable to endure her presence I roused myself for a final effort, and conjured her to leave me to myself.

"Madame shall have her will," she said softly, "for I am anxious to learn if there are tidings of the king's capture. Doubtless madame can attend to her own toilet this morning!"

I saw nothing of her until the morrow, and for this I was thankful. After all, everything—even the insolence of ser-



vants—seemed easy to bear, if only the king were free. But the next morning, as I lay in a half-dozz after a wakeful night, came Annette, laughing again. "The king is caught," she said; "the nation is not blind. Madame will have the pleasure of seeing them presently, for Messieurs Barnave and Pétion, from the Assembly, are gone to fetch them home."

This was the bitter end. The memory of that home-coming will abide with me until my death. The loss, the disappointment, the misery in our hearts, can never be repeated. And everywhere the world rejoiced at the sorrow of the king.

Even the daily misery *now* is less pitiful than the hopelessness of those first tidings, though municipal guards are at every corner and the palace is in very truth become a prison. Her blessed majesty has rough men set to watch her in her bed, and her helpless submission is pitiful to see.

All over the land men rave like evil spirits that know no rest. There are always new *jaqueries*, and the shedding of noble blood. Annette tells me of all she hears with a demure face but with gleaming eyes. "They are very ferocious—the French people," she will say. "How can they be so evil-hearted? Think, madame, of how they must have suffered first."

But after thinking of the very worst of their suffering, I can only say with Annette, "How can they be so cruel-hearted?" Only I, unlike Annette, am not mocking when I say it.



XXII.

*ANNETTE, A TRICOTEUSE.*

*September 1791.*

THERE have been few journeys on record more full of anguish and disappointment than that royal return to Paris from Varennes. Life and liberty had been so nearly won, and missed as by the passing of a breath. Looking at the matter in the light of God's ordering, we know that it must have ended in failure. Looking at it with our poor human wisdom, it was full of broken possibilities, of pitiful might-have-beens.

If it had been undertaken sooner, when Mirabeau's strong hand could have carried it through, there would have been less need of caution, less danger from discovery. The queen might have secured her elaborate *secrétaire*, her outfit, her jewels, and still have gone unchallenged ; or if, delaying still, that one disastrous postponement of a single day had been avoided, and M. de Bouillé's guards and relays had all been in their places, other misadventures would have mattered less ; or, even against such sorry odds, if his majesty, King Louis, had not shown his face at Ste. Ménehould for Drouet to remark it, they might, being so near, have reached their succour safely ; or, at the worst extremity, if, being a king, King Louis had been equal to a kingly deed, and choosing the lives of his wife and children above some lesser things, had given the order for the troops of Captain Deslons to clear the way, other errors might even then have been retrieved.



Such vague regrets filled Marguerite's thoughts as she watched from the windows the exultation and joy of the people.

She thought little of her own suffering, when one considers that she was young, and that life would naturally have been so fair to her; and yet that period of suspense, and the time of humiliation which followed, told sadly even upon her buoyant health and strength. The old joyousness faded from her smile as the brightness vanished from her life. The birds seemed to have lost their old-time sweetness of song, because the echo had died in her heart, and she fancied the spring time never would return without bringing with it a sense of loss—an odour of death. The long summer wore slowly away. The city was hot and oppressive. No more golden days at Fontainebleau, or rambles about the little Trianon—only insolent guards within and the glare of evil eyes without. The dulness of the present she might have borne, but the future brooded dark and threatening before her eyes. Truly it was “earthquake weather,” with subterranean mutterings, and lurid lights, and lowering skies above them.

Marguerite's thoughts were all the sadder for the letters from her father, who had fled to Coblenz, barely escaping with his life. His château was in ruins, his furniture, mirrors, clothing, plate, everything of any value, had been carried away by his enemies. Even the fine mosaic floors—which Marguerite so well remembered—the polished wood-work, bits of brass and iron, had been ruthlessly removed. And what the leaders of the *jaquerie* could not take for themselves they had wantonly destroyed. The four bare walls alone remained to mark the scene of her old happy days.

But though all these things weighed heavily upon her, yet time is a wonderful healer. One can grow accustomed even to lurid skies, if such is the daily weather. Besides, all things have their compensation, and by these bitter days those who loved the king were drawn together, heart to heart, in a common



sorrow. His majesty was no longer able to recompense his friends; but he could love them still, and having less power than even his own subjects, he might well love in the manner of common men. Louis XVI., with all his immobility, was not the man to forget a favour or a friend, as Madame Campan has borne eloquent testimony. Marie Antoinette's *levées* became in those days the close communion of dear friends; for the court, though small, was purified by suffering, and those who still dared to appear at its gatherings were loyal beyond a peradventure. They were the true nobility of France, ready to suffer with their king when no hope remained of his rewards, and proud to be his servants when service was a peril and a shame. It was no wonder that to Marguerite's enthusiasm even death seemed easier in such company, just as life seemed larger and more perfect.

There were many like M. d'Arblay, once counted of themselves, who still moved among them to outward seeming. The very presence of this man now cast a shadow over Marguerite; while at the same time she learned to look upon M. de Neale, if not with love, at least with a tenderer liking than she had ever felt before. He was one of that chosen *coterie* who were always near the king; and Marguerite seeing him so constantly, and being tender of conscience, began to be vaguely troubled because she gave him so little. The memory of the tears with which she had wet her pillow, after that fruitless attempt to plead for Annette, was still fresh in her mind. The tears were half of anger to be sure, yet all the same she knew that her heart had haunted chambers which she did not dare explore; and since she was not really wedded to M. de Neale, her conscience cried out upon her that it might be better to set him free. And this was why, one soft June evening, after listening for a while half-heartedly to her lover's talk, she said to him abruptly,—

“Monsieur de Neale, I have something to tell you which is very hard to say.”



"What then, sweet heart?" he asked. "Will it also be hard to hear? I think a death-sentence from your lips could not be very bitter."

She hesitated then; a feeling of great pity came upon her for this tender-hearted man who had been so hardly tested.

"I am only learning to know myself," she said at last. "I never said that I loved you, monsieur; I thought there was no need—that people could marry without love. I do not take back my troth"—she grew quite pale, and her voice trembled a little—"I only ask if you want a wife who does not really love you?"

He did not speak at first, and when he answered his voice was not more steady than her own. "Do you love any other man, Marguerite?"

Then she too sat with her hands folded, and the silence and the moonlight seemed to speak for her.

"It is like the beginning of the world to me," she said at last. "My heart, too, seems 'without form and void;' but it has strange fancies—it is not worthy of your taking, monsieur."

For answer to that he raised her hand gently to his lips. "There is none worthier under heaven," he said. And again the moonlight and the silence fell between them: it was hard to speak.

"Do you wish to be free?" he asked at last in a low voice, "or do you tell me this for conscience' sake?"

"My only wish is that I could love you as you merit, monsieur," she replied.

"You mean to tell me," he asked gently, taking her hand again, "that there is some one else whom you love?"

"Alas! I hardly know," she answered, flushing deeply.

"Is it D'Arblay?" he asked quickly.

"Ah, no; believe me, monsieur, it is no one worthy to be your rival—it is an idle fancy, an unworthy feeling, which I must needs crush out."

"I think you could not love one unworthy of you, Mar-



guerite," he answered sadly, studying her face as it turned toward him in the moonlight. "But however it may be, I trust you with all my heart. If there is anything that I can do to make you happier, sweet heart, tell it to me. I love you too well to stand in the way of your happiness."

"You are so good," said Marguerite faintly. "Only love me well enough to have patience with me, and teach me to love you," she added perversely, in the face of all she had intended.

And so this confession resulted only in a tenderer love for Marguerite on her lover's part, and on hers in a revulsion of feeling from which she was persuaded that she returned his love. She chid herself bitterly for her foolish scruples, and called all her strange experience the mere impression of a dream. And M. de Nesle, although he watched with the vigilance almost of a guardian angel to see if any evil lay in wait for her, yet straitly held himself from seeking any further light upon this matter. His lady's secrets were as sacred as his own.

In those days Annette spent many hours in the gallery of the Jacobin Hall, knitting amongst the far-famed *tricoteuses*, whose tongues were busier than their fingers. Annette's mind was never disturbed by anxious fears lest her services should be required at the palace. Like all the world in those days, she was free to follow her own sweet will—a "law unto herself." Those meetings of the Jacobin Club were full of interest to her—she had no lack of attention in the *entr'actes*. In fact, she had a little *coterie* of her own, and some share in "moving the arms" which moved the Assembly, and, through the Assembly, France. This was a high calling for a woman such as Annette, if it had been pursued with dignity and mercy. But the counsels of the Jacobins were tempered with no such virtues.

However, Annette's conscience turned and stirred a little in its sleep when, after the return of the king from Varennes, M. de Nesle stopped her one day at the head of the great stair-



case. Annette, as I have said, with all her hardness of heart, had a strange attraction toward this gallant gentleman. It was not such a feeling as men call love: all that she had of love to give she had bestowed upon her cousin Henri. It was not caused by motives of self-interest for the sake of largess or reward which he might have to give her. Her feeling was more like the sentiment of reverence with which, as a young girl, she had knelt at Caen before the patron saint in the little parish church, believing that he could see into her heart and would pity her abasement.

M. de Nesle may not have been a hero to Marguerite, but in the eyes of Annette he was perhaps what St. George would have been to an English girl—something between a saint and a hero, whose goodness she adored the more because he took thought for her sins as well as her sorrows. When, therefore, he spoke her name, although her heart was full of bitterness against aristocrats, she stopped, and with a graceful courtesy waited to hear what he had to say.

"Annette," he began, "you and I have not spoken for a long while; the world has been very busy lately."

"Monsieur is right," said Annette; "there has been much to do."

"I have not forgotten how skilfully you cared for me when I was in trouble," he continued with a little smile. "A friend in one's necessity is always the truest friend."

Now which of all the grand seigneurs had ever called Annette a friend before?

"But all the same I have something against you," he added gently; "for I have reason to believe that your heart is not true to my dear lady, and also that you are not a good subject of the king."

"Is it I, monsieur?" said Annette blandly, and then a colour stole into her cheeks.

"I do not blame you too much," he continued. "It must be always a sore trial to withstand one's own flesh and blood; but



when all is said, there is nothing so beautiful under heaven as truth. Whatever side we take, Annette, let us do it openly, in the sight of man as well as of God."

"What matter does it make, monsieur, what such as I should do?" she answered with some excitement. "Are we not all base *canaille*, we of the people? Have the people ever been taught to be true?"

"There are no *canaille* in the sight of God," he answered. "In his kingdom the most loving shall stand first, Annette. If we keep true hearts and white souls, we shall all share his glory with the angels."

"Now that is something for a nobleman to say," said Annette gently.

"It is not I who say it," he answered, "but God, who himself is *truth*. For the sake of your own soul, Annette, be a true woman, and keep a tender heart."

"No one has ever cared much for my soul," said Annette; but her voice was not quite clear, and she raised her fingers furtively to her eyes. "Thank you, monsieur. I will remember that *you* have cared. You are very kind. There is nothing that I would not do for you, monsieur, because you *care*."

And thinking of these things—how he had cared, and also how he cared for her lady—Annette tried to rake together the smouldering embers of the love she herself had once borne to Marguerite, to be such a woman as he approved. But the shadow of Henri seemed ever in some way between, and all the old love had turned to the bitterness of wormwood.

The man whom Marguerite feared was never absent from those sittings of the Jacobins. He even took part at times in the discussions, though not with eloquence. Being keen-sighted, he had observed that Annette's vaunted love for her lady had long been a thing of the past. He could wait his time when the day should come for settling with aristocrats. Once in the course of a debate, when they two were sitting side by side, and Annette counted her stitches, he took occasion to whisper in



her ear, "How fares thy dear lady in these troublous times? Art thou still sorry for her, *citoyenne*?"

Annette laughed. Her laugh had not the old musical sound, but seemed rusty and out of tune. "I never shed tears over aristocrats," she said.

"Has she become less dear than she was two years ago?" he asked mockingly.

Annette's eyes flashed.

"Thou dost not hate her more than I," she said, "or with more reason."

"*Bien!*" he said yawning; "what shall be my reward, *citoyenne*, in case I avenge us both?"

"I do not render gifts before the service," said Annette. "I might far better beware of thee, since my lady warned me long ago that thou hast an evil face. Faces are good or evil, I suppose, according to the eyes which see them."

The debate ended at that moment, the galleries were loudly applauding, and Annette, being reminded of the lateness of the hour by the suggestion of her appetite, folded her knitting and took her leave with malice in her heart.

She found on her return that her lady was with the queen, and she began to wander idly about the room where Marguerite had passed the morning. What had this lady been doing, and how was she learning from necessity to wait upon herself? There was a book open on the little *escritoire*. This proved, on further showing, to be a Bible; and Annette did not care for Bibles. What had the faithful, in full communion with the Church, to do with such a harmful book as that?

Close by, in her lady's handwriting, was a copy of some Latin verses which the maid could not decipher. They did not matter much; there was something else which seemed to matter more. In the corner of the paper, as though to try a pen, or perhaps in mere idleness and absence of mind, her lady had been writing two or three names over and over again: "Marguerite—Clairac—Marguerite de Clairac;" and then a



little further down, "Henri." This latter name was only written twice, and the pen had been hastily drawn across it.

"That is not the name of M. de Nesle," said Annette, with a smile which showed the whiteness of her teeth. "Madame must be losing her reason. If she had not drawn the pen across the writing now, one might have fancied there was no harm."

She turned the paper hastily over as she heard her lady's footstep, and walked to the window. When Marguerite entered, Annette was so entertained with something in the courtyard that she did not turn her head until her name was spoken.

"Ah, madame," she said, "I was so absorbed in thought that I did not hear you. I was thinking of you, madame—how *triste* you are becoming, and how pale. Madame is not well."

"You have grown suddenly thoughtful about my health, Annette," said Marguerite dryly, and as she spoke she crossed the room and began laying away the papers on her *escritoire*.

"Madame knows," said Annette, "that one must look after the country. I also look after other things. I notice that madame does not sleep well, for I come in sometimes in the night when madame tosses in her sleep. Ah, yes, you are wrong, madame—I am always thoughtful."

"It must be in your own dreams that you fancy you come to me," said Marguerite coldly.

"If that only might be true," said Annette; "for sometimes I hear madame speak very strangely."

"Annette," said Marguerite, the colour suddenly flushing her face, "you must be under some strange delusion. I never have talked in my sleep."

"That is *drôle*," said Annette with a puzzled air. "Ah, well, it may be that it is *I* who dream. For it was 'Henri' that madame seemed to be calling, while it is *I* who have my heart set upon that name. Madame is right: it must have been *I* who was dreaming, for if I should talk in my dreams I also should call for 'Henri.'"



Marguerite answered, softly but with a touch of anger in her voice,—

"You have very wild imaginings, Annette; you are fond of making fairy-tales."

"Perhaps I am," said Annette incredulously; "and yet I cannot help the feeling that I was wide awake. Perhaps M. de Nesle's name is Henri, madame."

"Annette," said Marguerite, with flashing eyes and a pale face, yet speaking softly still, "were you so silly as to fancy that I should talk of *your* Henri in my sleep—if I spoke in sleep at all? In spite of all your traitorous laws, I am a De Clairac still, and no one can take my blood from me."

"Alas, madame!" said Annette gently, "that may be so. Yet many people with names as proud as yours have had their blood taken in these terrible times. Since blood is become of such small account, how was I to know but that madame might even dream of a Sansculotte—one lower than Henri Beaupré?"

"I had rather *die*," said Marguerite hastily, "than even dream of one beneath me—a traitor to my king!"

"So, so," said Annette softly; "one may say too much, madame, and one may say too little. It is best sometimes to hold one's word. I am a *citoyenne-patriote* after all, madame, and like Mademoiselle Théroigne, I have no lovers but *la France*—yet I like not that Henri should be called a traitor."

Marguerite's passion was exhausted; her very shame had carried her far beyond her first intent in speaking. The fear that this story of Annette's might not be wholly fiction led her to deny it the more fiercely. For if Annette should repeat her wild fancies to Henri himself, he might reason with a man's presumption that her kindness had been caused by a warmer feeling than gratitude.

As to Annette, she laughed to herself—yes, even to Marguerite's annoyance, laughed now and then aloud as she combed her lady's hair.

And Marguerite's fears were not wholly without reason; for



only a few days after, Annette came upon her cousin in the garden of the palace, and put a question to him :—

“Are you still in love, *mon ami* ?”

To which he made no answer, but looked down upon her in much displeasure.

“I have had such strange thoughts lately,” she said.

“Stranger than before ?” he asked her coldly.

“Why, yes,” said Annette slowly : “I have fancied you were in love with my lady.”

Henri changed neither colour nor countenance, as she hoped he might have done.

“If that were true,” he answered, “it is foolish for you to put it into words, since the doing so could only dishonour and displeasure the Lady Marguerite.”

“Ah, but I have other fancies too,” she said, “and I could tell you a tale, although you scorn me.”

“I scorn any woman who unsexes herself,” he replied shortly. “The Jacobins is no place for thee, Annette, and it is never a woman’s *rôle* to be cruel.”

“Oh, let that rest,” said Annette softly. “My lady talks in her dreams.”

Henri started involuntarily. “And what concern is that of yours or mine ?” he answered.

“Oh ! it is none of *mine*,” said Annette, with a curious laugh ; “it is not of me she speaks, but of thee, Citoyen Beaupré. Her voice is very sweet when she calls for ‘Henri.’”

“It is false !” he cried, setting his teeth, while his heart throbbed quickly at the possible truth of her words. That *she* should call for him, even if she called him to death, what a blessed thought ! and how gladly would he follow as at the voice of an angel, though flood and fire lay between ! “You are telling lies of your own invention,” he said in a moment, turning away, “and the sin is on your own soul. I am beginning, against my will, to think you capable of every evil thing.”

“Oh ! it is a lie, is it ?” cried Annette. “So said madame



when I taxed her with it. She was very angry—more angry even than thou art. ‘She had sooner *die* than even dream of one beneath her, who was a traitor to her king,’ said she.”

Henri’s eyes fell, and almost unconsciously he clenched his hand. A strong man is so utterly at the mercy of a woman who is weak but cruel. Annette laughed, and then he raised his eyes and looked at her. “That is enough,” he said. “If your thought were true, nothing that she could ever say of me, no wrong that she could ever do me, would make me swerve a hair’s-breadth from my allegiance. If your thought is not a true one, your words are idle words, and fall beyond the mark. Once for all, let us make an end.”

And Annette, although she knew right well that her words were not idle words, and had not fallen beyond the mark, quailed before the passion and indignation in his eyes. She could laugh, but the laugh was close upon tears.

It was on one of those days, when Marguerite’s heart was very heavy, that she remembered suddenly the little chapel of which Manon had told her—a place of dimness and quiet, where there were no swinging censers or chanting priests; where the images were in one’s mind, and the glory in one’s heart. This small house without adorning, where men came to God through the blessed Son of God, appealed strongly to Marguerite’s heart. She longed to go but once and rest in its quietness. But as all in the Tuileries who were not jailers were, in a greater or less degree, prisoners of the republic, Marguerite never thought of venturing beyond the gate.

Presently, however, in the pleasant September weather came a day in which one seemed awaking from some miserable dream. The king had accepted the constitution, and the people were full of joy. The king was to rule the people, and the people to obey the king, so long as his majesty had no commands to give, and did not avail himself of the veto which was reluctantly accorded.

As for King Louis, he foresaw the end of his troubles close



at hand ; but one who was very near his heart saw quite as clearly, and with very different eyes—a sad-faced woman, beautiful still in her waning, who wrote without much respite by night and day, just as though the constitution had never been accepted, nor the people cried “Vive le roi !” who struggled single-handed against the ruin and death which pressed closer and closer upon her every year—the meshes of the web which wound her. She would have reversed the saying of that wise old king, reading it thus—“Put not your trust in the people.” Marie Antoinette was too wise a woman not to doubt this joyous people who thirsted for her blood.

By royal order now the palace gates were thrown wide, and all the world thronged the gardens for a glimpse of the king. And on such gala days no one was so close a prisoner but that he might safely venture abroad. The autumn weather was full of sunshine, the very air was redolent with promises of joy. And it was then, on one soft Sabbath afternoon, that Marguerite’s haunting wish returned to her. The church bells had been ringing all the morning ; and though later in the day the streets were thronged with merry-makers, she had a fancy that there was afternoon service in that little Protestant chapel. It might be possible that Manon would be there, and that they two could sit side by side while they heard the words of life. In such a frame of mind she should not mind holding Manon’s hand, and fancying that she also was a girl of the people. Marguerite was as credulous of joy as even the king himself.

She threw about her a sombre cloak, and donning a little hood which fitted close about her face, passed through the corridors and court-yards unobserved. The crowds through which she passed did not know her for an aristocrat ; they jostled and saluted her with the easy nonchalance shown to a veritable *citoyenne*. There was a certain merry good-fellowship abroad in those days. Some even fancied that the age of gold had come—that freed France was the real Arcadia ; though doubtless Sir Philip would have failed to recognize it.



The little side street where the Huguenot chapel stood was deserted by the merry crowd. The sound of the preacher's voice came droningly through the open window as she approached the churchyard, though a little bird upon the doorstep almost drowned it with his singing. The window was plain like the chapel itself, with no pictured glass or gorgeous colouring ; and the sash being raised a little because the afternoon was warm, Marguerite stole up softly and stood looking in. When her eyes had grown wonted to the dimness, she could readily count the heads within, they were so few. Many of them were white with age, and all were bowed and reverent.

"Will mademoiselle step within?" said the old sexton, who had spied her from the window, and hobbled forth with his slow rheumatic gait ; "the discourse is almost ended."

Marguerite bowed her head in assent, and the old sexton led her on until they were quite under the pulpit. The light was dim, and the faces were all strange to Marguerite, yet the eyes of the old man above her seemed to greet her with the glance of a friend.

He had little left to say after her coming ; and not knowing what had gone before, it was difficult at first for her to gather the thread of his meaning. He must have been speaking of the blessing of liberty—thinking it, as so many others did, a glorious thing to win. It seemed natural to Marguerite that he should think so ; at least she had not wandered here to quarrel over things like this. And when he proceeded in a quiet voice to tell them that, glorious as was the liberty of France, there was a better liberty, a truer brotherhood than this, she raised her head and looked in his face as though his words might be the "bread of life" to her.

"My friends," repeated this wise old man, "let us strive for liberty from the chains with which Satan has bound us. Man's tyranny ruins our bodies, breaks up our homes, makes the earth a wilderness. Man's tyranny can water the joyous land with our blood. But never was there a king so strong as to shut the gates of heaven. Satan's bondage ruins our souls, makes our



homes into haunts of evil, brands us with the mark of Cain, shuts us out from the mercy of God.

"The blood of martyrs does not cry to God in vain; 'he will avenge them speedily:' there is no vengeance which will avail for the souls that are martyred by Satan. The slaves of kings may be God's freemen; the slaves of Satan are for ever slaves.

"My friends, better is Christ's liberty than the liberty of the nation. It is better to be as ye were—in want of all things, like the Son of man himself, who 'had not where to lay his head'—than to make your new liberty into a spiritual bondage. It is better to hunger as ye have for bread than to miss the 'bread of life.' 'Eat ye all of it,' for that is free. The Lord gives himself to you in perpetual fellowship; he is your liberty. Crucify him not afresh by deeds of cruelty, but 'keep straight through the desert' of the world 'a highway for our God.'"

This was all that Marguerite heard. All this she had known before; yet the words seemed to have an especial power as coming from one who might have been a saint from her own Romish calendar. She bowed her head in her hands. It was never her way, when any path seemed straight, and the end before her, to delay in choosing it.

"If He gives himself to me," she thought, "I will take him for my own. I will go to God through Jesus Christ; he must be the true highway."

They were singing, as she said this, some grand old hymn. The words and the music were both new to Marguerite; but as a child is soothed by a lullaby without understanding the love-words in it, so she was quieted and made stronger by the unknown hymn.

As she was passing out the old minister touched her arm.

"My child," he asked gently, "are you in any trouble?"

"I think, good sir," she answered, with her sweet self-possession and in the softest voice, "the trouble is mended, for your words have brought me peace."

"Were you looking for God's liberty, my child?" he asked.



"I knew there was something which I ought to have," she answered, "and your last words seemed for me."

"The Lord is the only way," he replied, with a quiet confidence. "In palace or in hovel the way is one. For, my daughter, although you have hidden your figure, you cannot hide the courtliness of your face or the music of your voice. If you want help or counsel, come freely to me at any time; yet now it is best that you get speedily away for fear of evil-minded persons. And the Lord's grace go with you."

Drawing her hood more closely, Marguerite slipped quietly down the aisle with the few stragglers who still had tarried. The sun was setting now, and a rosy light crept through the little window. A vague fear crossed her mind that the twilight would not last until she could reach the palace. As she lingered for a moment in the doorway a man stepped up to her and spoke her name. Though his voice brought distressing memories to her mind, yet she answered with a quiet dignity, with a coldness too which she was far from feeling: "I have been looking for something steadfast, Monsieur Beaupré, and I came here, to Manon's little church, to find it."

"There is nothing so steadfast as the Lord himself," he answered gravely. "I can ask no better gift for you, Lady Marguerite, than that you may have found him."

She smiled, and in face of the thoughts which constrained her, her smile was kind and gentle. And as for Henri, he also was confronted by a memory—the memory of those words which Annette had repeated, "I had rather die than even dream of one beneath me." He did not wonder at them; they were only an echo of other words which he had spoken to himself. It seemed only like pressing the clouds over a hope that was always dead. "Beneath her!" Yes, he knew it; for in his eyes God's saints were not above her. Yet to him—most inconsistently—it was not the blood of the De Clairacs which raised her to such a height, but the sweetness of her womanhood, the whiteness of her soul. This was a lover's fancy.



XXIII.

*A SOMBRE BRIDAL.*

MANON WRITES.

*October 1791.*

I WAS wedded one month ago to-day, but not by mine own intent; and my wedding was a sad one, although I am sure this was not through any one's contrivance. Truly, I never had thought that as a bride I should carry so heavy a heart.

Only two weeks before that day I had protested, against all my father's prayers, that I would not be wedded until the reign of peace and plenty had begun. It is quite true that there has been an undue amount of marrying during the last few years, and many folk—young men and maidens—have had the fancy that they could serve the nation better wedded than apart. Yet the thought never came in such a shape to me. Times of sorrow are not times for making merry; and when God's hand lies heavy on the land, it seems most meet that one should fast and pray and mortify one's soul. For the king and the people may be of one accord, yet truly the enemy is threatening France on every hand—Prussia and Austria, and even those hated English, who, as my father says, for ever meddle with what concerns them not. And what is France to do against such foes as these, who have waited for the hour of her sorrow and weakness to rise against her? What *can* she do with a changeful king and a starving people? Indeed, some say—and God forgive me for the writing if it be not true!—



that the very queen is selling us to the enemy. But this I truly believe to be a lie.

So when Jacques urged my marriage, some five weeks since, I told him that it could not be. But between that and another week the constitution was accepted, the king had his palace thrown wide that all the world might enter, and we all believed that he really loved us, and had signed with us a "covenant of peace."

That was a glorious day. The sun shone as brightly as if God himself were smiling on our hopes. Is this really the end, I wonder? Will the people never be cruel again, or kings oppress the people? Is the evil gone from men's hearts because they clasp hands with so much fervour and embrace each other in the street?

And just as I wonder now, I was wondering that morning as I stood by the window watching the merry crowd. The breeze was soft as in the month of May, and the laughing voices of little children came pleasantly from without. Yet still I saw hard and cruel faces as I stood drinking in God's dear sunshine, and one man who bore the darkest look of all stopped at our own doorstep. I knew the face, yet never could I grow wonted to its ugliness or love it one whit the better. I felt a shrinking of my soul as I saw M. Marat mount the steps in search of my poor old father. I could not help questioning whether, now that all the world seemed to have grown tender-hearted, he also had forgotten the words printed in that journal of his not very long ago. Had this blessed day of peace made him at peace with aristocrats? He had wished them to be tortured, mutilated, even burned at the stake, as all the world might read. "Brand them with hot irons," he wrote, "cut off their limbs, slit their tongues!"—nay, I think even the torments of hell would not have satisfied his vengeance. My father says that these are figures of speech—Marat does not really mean them. But I think people can *say* things so many times that they grow to *meaning* them at last. It is a



cursed thing that such men should have a hand in the redemption of my country !

As he reached the door I fled into the other chamber, where Henri sat with Félice upon his knee. She had her arms about his neck, and was kissing him softly on one cheek and the other, while she coaxed him not to go away. As I closed the door behind me I heard M. Marat, who doubtless guessed at the meaning of my flight, laugh derisively to himself. Henri started and half-rose from his chair.

"It is that brute Marat," he said. "Does he come here often, Manon?"

"Not so often as M. Danton," I said. "I think he is aiming to get some service from father."

"Father will rue the day that he ever beheld the man," said Henri shortly.

I heard M. Marat's heavy steps shuffling up the stairs to my father's room, and my heart sunk within me.

"If there is an evil, unclean thing on the face of God's earth, it is that Jean Paul Marat," said Henri sternly.

"Oh, hush!" I said. "How careless and unwise you are! The walls are so very thin. Think of your own safety a little, dear Henri."

Henri gave a short laugh, which grated unpleasantly upon my ear.

"What is life worth, Manon, that one should think of it, even a little?" he said. "As well to die in one way as another when God calls us."

"O Henri!" I cried, putting my arms around him, and mingling my kisses with those of Félice, "have you so little courage? Our lives do not belong to us but to the good God; they are a sacred trust. We may not throw them away when we are weary. You told me once that it takes more courage to live than to die. Have you no courage, Henri?"

Henri laughed softly, and kissed me. "You are a good preacher, Manon," he said, "and you are wise. Above all



things, you are wise to bring a man's own words back to confront his soul. Yes, I am a sorry coward sometimes. May God forgive my faithlessness !”

“Don't make life more of a burden than it need be,” I said ; “for my sake try to be happy.”

“What a foolish Manon !” said Henri, kissing my wet eyes. “Don't remember my words. Life a burden ! why no. I have a use for it yet, and *God* may have many. I would not willingly part with it.”

“What is *your* use, Henri ?” I asked, checking my tears. “Is it God's service—to uphold his cause ?”

“I have never done much at that,” he said, “though, God knows, it was never from want of desire. That was not my meaning, Manon. Yet all service which is right service is also service for him.”

And then, since a woman's wit is apter than a man's, and quicker at reading parables, I caught roughly at his meaning.

“O Henri !” I said, “don't you see all the trouble is over now ? The king has given the people all they want, and the people love the king.”

“Ah yes,” said Henri sadly ; “*to-day* the people love their king.”

And in spite of all the merry-making of that long day, his words abode in my mind. Was it possible, perhaps, that by to-morrow they would love the king no longer ?

But Henri and I were both mistaken ; for the people are loyal still, and still the king is happy, although the constitution has been full four weeks signed.

That afternoon I dressed myself in white because it was a holiday, and sat by the window waiting for Jacques, who was to come to supper. Merry crowds of people still thronged the streets, and sang and shouted as though the millennium had come, while others danced to the singing. I was so busy watching them that I did not notice that Jacques had mounted the steps, until I suddenly found him beside me. He also was



dressed for a gala day—in ruffled shirt, silk breeches, and powdered hair; and as he has always railed at powder as a device of the aristocrats, his appearance greatly amazed me.

“Why, my friend,” I said, laughing, “truly you look as though you were bidden to a wedding.”

“And why not?” he answered, taking my hand. “Could there ever be a better day than this for the union of kindred souls? I greatly wish that I had a wedding to attend, if it were yours and mine.”

And then I tried deftly to turn the converse to other matters more befitting the day. But Jacques was restless, and seemed to give little heed to my words. After a while he asked if I would not go out with him before supper and see the people rejoicing; and I gladly gave consent.

I must even confess that, while I put on Félice’s bonnet and my own, my heart was light and merry. I did not believe with Henri that evil days were still to come. I thought, as I think to-day, that France is free; and what have evil days to do with a free, united country?

“Haste thee, Manon,” called Jacques from the foot of the stairs; “the sun is falling westward.”

I ran down, throwing my cloak about me as I went; and arm-in-arm we passed into the street, with Félice clinging to my side. Some bells near at hand were ringing merrily, and the people still were dancing to the music. But after going a little way, Jacques, to my disappointment, turned suddenly down a side street which led away from the tumult and noise. I was vexed at leaving the people, and looked up at him with a question in my eyes.

“People are offering thanksgiving in the churches, and you are such a good little Huguenot I thought you might like to return thanks for the deliverance of the nation,” he said.

“I have done that already many times to-day,” I answered softly. “All the day long I have had a silent service of thanks deep down in my heart. But yes, you are right, Jacques; we



will go and thank God together. I am glad that you have the wish."

"Well, yes," said Jacques slowly. "I am not a devout man, Manon, but I believe in giving thanks for special mercies; and I think it is always a good thing when a man has a wife who can pray for him."

"It is well to be prayed for, dear," I said; "yet God requires the devotion of each heart for itself—one cannot be righteous for another."

Jacques did not answer, but I am sure he was not ill-pleased. And as I spoke, we came suddenly in sight of our own little chapel. The bell was ringing, and a few people were straying out and in. Just behind it the sun was setting, and the chapel seemed to stand out gloomy and dark by contrast with the glory. The tumult which we had left behind reached us as one hears noises in a dream.

"We shall go in and pray together," I said, "each for the other, and both for France."

We entered the door of the little church, which is low and overhung with ivy—so low, indeed, that Jacques involuntarily bowed his head to enter. There was gloom and dimness within, and for a moment everything seemed confused. But presently I saw that the church was almost empty; only two or three figures, which I could discern by the light of the candles, stood beneath the pulpit. The fancy struck me that one of these figures was my father, and although there was nothing very strange in this, it gave me a feeling of quiet and content.

But almost at the same moment a creeping horror fell upon me, as I became sure that the man who stood beside him was that odious M. Marat. He seemed like some unearthly creature, with his ghastly flattened face and bulging eyes.

"My love," said Jacques to me, as he led me slowly up the aisle, "could there be a better day than this—the blessed day of the resurrection of France—for you and me to make each other happy?"



To make each other happy! What strange and trifling thoughts will come to one sometimes, even with the most solemn surroundings. I am always glad to make another happy when I can; but, for myself, I could have chosen pleasure more to my mind than being wedded without warning or forethought. My self-will rebelled against being taken unawares and at a disadvantage. I stood suddenly still.

"Your father wished it so," Jacques proceeded calmly, standing also beside me. "It was by his sanction that I have tried to take the fortress by surprise. Shall we not be forgiven, love, and will you not consent?"

A stronger-hearted woman would have said her nay and ended—would have chosen rather to be covered with a moment's shame than to feel herself trapped and deceived. But I am not a strong-minded woman; and I knew by that time that these people, four or five in number, were there solely to see me wedded, and I had no courage left me. Above all, I was stayed by those terrible eyes of M. Marat, as a silly bird is drawn to its doom by the eyes of a basilisk. Besides, I really loved my Jacques, and the day was full of happy auguries.

I hesitated a moment before I yielded to Jacques's entreaties, and then we walked together to the altar. The dear old pastor held his hands in blessing toward us. The words of the marriage service fell distinctly on my ears, but I heard them as one in a dream, who hears and does not understand. For all the time, with a curious fascination, my eyes were drawn toward M. Marat's face; and while the promises I made were burning themselves on my heart, a voice within myself kept saying over and over, "Can any marriage prosper which is joined in presence of such a witness?"

God knows I have no faith in omens, yet this seemed too ill an omen to be wholly disregarded.

While Pasteur Leroy pronounced the blessing, and I felt Jacques's hand warm with life in my own, some distant bell began to toll and toll like a tocsin, making me shiver with fear.



Every one shook hands with me then—even M. Marat, although I shrank from his touch.

And Jacques and I strolled home alone in the quiet evening. For some time it was Jacques who did all the talking; I seemed to have much to say, but no voice with which to say it. My thoughts crowded fast upon each other, and every thought seemed to bring a feeling of rising tears. At last I found voice and courage to speak my mind.

"Jacques," I said, "if you had given me time to breathe, I never would have consented to be wedded so, and without my brother's presence."

Jacques laughed and shrugged his shoulders. "Then, my love, in that case," he said, "I fear we never should have been wedded at all. Your brother has no favour to spare for me, and I can well dispense with his presence. Let us forget him."

"Forget Henri!" I cried in great astonishment; "that will I never, Jacques!"

"Then you must surely bring sorrow to your own heart, *mon amie*," he answered quietly. "Henri is not the ardent patriot that a man with his advantages is bound to be. He holds of late an office of captain from the nation, and he holds it quite too lightly for the nation's service."

"Henri is a true patriot, Jacques," I answered gently. "He does his duties well."

"That may be, Manon," said Jacques, with some small show of rancour. "A Lafayette patriot, as one may say—a Feuillant—like the rest of those Parisian guards. They had better look to their laurels all of them, for they have to be watched and sifted. Let us not talk of these things on this blessed day, *petite*, when France and we are one. Let us rather thank our happy fate which has given us to each other at last."

It did occur to me that Jacques might better thank his own treachery for such a consummation; but thinking best not to use unpleasant words, I answered quietly,—

"If I saw any cause to be thankful, Jacques, for what I



had not intended—and perhaps I shall do so after a time—it is God whom I shall thank, and not my fate. And oh, Jacques, since we are really wedded, let us have this bond between us, closer than any other—let us serve God in company, and try to do his will.”

Jacques gave a low laugh, which was not unkind, and yet which grieved me most unspeakably. “I had rather *you* did the praying,” he answered. “Sometimes when one has to help to bear up the nation there are deeds to be done which it is just as well not to pray over.”

“None but evil deeds then,” I answered with some vehemence. “And oh, Jacques, promise, for my sake, that you will never have aught to do with those.”

But Jacques only laughed again, though he caressed my hand and raised it to his lips. Jacques is not to be led or won by tenderness, as other men might be. Even now, although I have been wedded such a little while, I begin to know him better than I used. Not that I love him any less; only, where I saw him through a mist before I see more clearly now. I am afraid his devotion to his country makes him too bitter toward her enemies. Sometimes I fancy, too, although this may be wrong, that he was unduly anxious to be married, because he was wearied of playing a part before me of pretending to be gentler-hearted than he really was.

But we must not judge each other. Perhaps this marriage, being after my own mind, was altogether a temptation of the evil one, and I was basely choosing my own will against the will of God. And if it should be so, I wonder if my retribution will come swiftly; or is it perhaps come already, in these strange misgivings which cross my soul at times?

But my thoughts and my misgivings are my own; it is neither loyal nor true to put foolish words on paper which might perchance, some time, meet other eyes than mine. Jacques is very good and kind to me; yet when he talks of the country, his words make me shudder, as though they had



been borrowed from Camille Desmoulins or M. Marat himself. Perhaps, after all—I do not know—Jacques's views may err no more on the one side than mine do on the other. I have told him how gracious her majesty was to me on the day when I met her in the gardens. But he laughs, and says it is the policy of the queen to win the people; that none but an innocent little heart like mine would be ensnared by her smiles. For while the king makes a show of being at peace with the people, she is urging on the Austrians to lay waste the country and destroy it. He ranks her with all the unseemly women of whom we read—the Messalinas, the Lucretia Borgias, and Bianca Capellos of history. Jacques has a long list of these upon his tongue, and from much repetition I remember some of their names; but as to their deeds, I have less knowledge than Jacques. When I listen to him, I half believe that all he says is true; but when I am alone, I only remember her majesty's tearful eyes, and the way in which she spoke of her little ones.

I have much time for thinking, because Jacques spends his evenings at the Hall of the Jacobins; and I am afraid he will belong to the new Legislative Assembly. Even my father has become a municipal, and has his share in governing the city. For my part, I think it is small honour to be so exalted, for the committees are not always composed of very upright men; and ever since I strayed the other day upon this verse of Holy Writ, it keeps on ringing in my mind, "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted."

And those who should be accounted true leaders betray the trust of the nation, like M. de Lafayette, who has passed for a patriot, and who forced his troops to fire upon the innocent people in the Champ de Mars last spring. Oh, that was a fearful massacre—old men, and women, and little children, all cut down without right or reason! As M. Desmoulins said, "The altar of the country was strown with dead bodies." Nearly ten thousand poor defenceless citizens were killed that



day, whose martyr blood cries out on that wretched general. He well deserves his ill-repute among all good patriots. Jacques says it is time for Paris to rise *en masse*; but I always bear in mind that One wiser than Jacques has said, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

Jacques says also that if all the women were as faint-hearted as I, the revolution would have been delayed another century. He thanked God the other day with some bitterness that there were women in France capable of making a prisoner of their king. But he added with more tenderness, "Where would have been the glorious sixth of October if all the women had been like my little wife?" So I think he will never be content with me. I was glad enough that those poor hungry women captured the king; but if it could have been done without shedding of blood, I should have been more content.

Last evening there was a great conflagration in the direction of the manufactory of Sèvres. It seemed as though all Paris might be in flames before the morning. If we were living in the olden times, when people believed in strange portents and ghostly visitors, we might have thought some terrible evil brooded over the city.

But when the men employed at Sèvres were brought forward and put to the question, they confessed (without much urging, I am afraid) that they had been hired by the king to burn the copies of some new book which was about to be circulated, containing some plain speech about the queen; that her majesty had compelled the king to purchase the whole edition at a most enormous price—enough to feed all Paris probably. "That was lest the world should know of her evil deeds," said Jacques; "and now the world will know quite as well, for stray leaves are scattered abroad, where all who choose may read."

Jacques bought some of them himself, and brought them home to me.

"Now you see, Manon, my love," he said, "that all which I



have told you is true. Let us have no more foolish weakness on your part in regard to that infamous woman."

I have read the leaves, and I "see" this—that people can write evil things as well as speak them. I am not so credulous as once I was.

Yet, God knows, there is much to stir up the hatred of the people. At Caen, my mother's home, the Romish clergy are again at their old evil practices. They would like to kindle another St. Bartholomew in the midst of our glorious liberty. How can one ever expect the seed of that "scarlet woman" to love either country or people? It is not France but Rome which holds their hearts; and *I* say that the sooner all such traitors are sent to Rome the better. Jacques laughs in great delight when I say such words, and calls me a Jacobin; but God forbid that I should ever verify his words! I am a Frenchwoman, a Huguenot, and my blood boils at the thought that God's dear children should have their souls so pitilessly snared in the toils of Rome. I may not hate *people*, it is true, but surely I may hate that Church of Antichrist whose priests are refusing to take the oath and become good citizens, but who go about everywhere stirring up strife. It seems very strange that people should be so misled, and should fight against the blessing of liberty which is offered them, as though it were a curse. There are fearful insurrections against the nation in La Vendée, of which Jacques was telling me this morning, all occasioned by priestcraft. Doubtless some of these traitorous priests may think with St. Paul that they "verily ought to do" these evil things in the service of God. But Jacques shakes his head, and says there is no conscience in the matter; that men who talk treason in the confessional, and rouse harmless men to frenzy, should be put to death for it.

So what with Austrians and emigrants without, and rebellious priests in our own bosom, it is well to be humble even in our joy.



XXIV.

*THE TWENTIETH OF JUNE.*

MARGUERITE'S STORY.

*October 1791.*

MONSIEUR DE NESLE started last evening on a mission of great secrecy for the king. Although he assured me his errand was not one of danger, yet he courted a word of tenderness, and wished to lighten his heart before going. He referred for the first time to my luckless confession, as he bade me farewell. "Did I remember those words I had spoken so long ago?" And I, who hoped that *he* had forgotten them, blushed with shame. "Do you understand yourself better now, love?" he asked. "And have you a word for my heart?"

"You need not fear," I answered, "that I shall fail to be a loving wife to you, François;" and then I raised my head and gave him, for the first time of my own free will, a kiss upon his lips. I think he was content; and the memory of that kiss seems to set my heart at rest.

Meanwhile, although the people are turbulent, the king is surrounded with friends, and the days go smoothly; even the National Guard are growing loyal. For this we owe no thanks to M. de Lafayette, although one hears that even he is growing to be a king's man. He trims his sails to suit the breezes. I think we have much to be thankful for that this tyrant has at last resigned his post of royal jailer and retired to his estates. My dear queen said of him last summer, "He dreams of noth-



ing but his United States and his American Republic. He will see what a *French* Republic is."

Perhaps he may—God knows! Let the "hero of two worlds" depart in peace.

The new Legislative Assembly is very audacious. They are mere boys at the best; and what can they know of governing? The other day they roused themselves to anger against the king because he could not make his hours accord with theirs, and decreed that he should no longer enjoy the titles of sire and majesty, or have his chair of state in the Assembly. It is so supremely silly that it is enough to make one laugh, if one were not so angry. His majesty very wisely refused to attend their sitting, and this brought them to their senses.

March 1792.

The winter is over since I wrote before, and my heart is not merry as I open my book. The spring time is not waking for me; and this not only that the king's misfortunes thicken, and that M. de Nesle has been in prison for several months, but also for another cause, which is not quite clear to my mind, and which I would gladly disallow—a pain in my heart, which comes without a warning; a presence which haunts me, and which I dare not look in the face.

M. de Nesle fulfilled the king's mission in safety, but on returning was seized as a suspect and thrown into La Force. I am full of sorrow for his misery, and yet for himself I truly believe he will esteem it an honour to suffer for the king. Now, much as I trust to the succour of *les émigrés*, I always mingle a little scorn with all my thoughts of them, comparing them with others who have preferred to risk their lives rather than leave his majesty. And M. de Nesle is one of these. I do not count myself—the saints forbid! I am not marked out by the people for any special vengeance; and I have no one to live for but my father and my queen.

The king has striven earnestly for M. de Nesle's liberty;



but the king, alas ! has no more power than the lowest of St. Antoine. And I feel all the more earnest for his deliverance, lest I should seem to my own conscience, through want of sufficient love, to fail in zeal for his cause.

One evening, not long ago, when Annette had leisure to braid my hair, I lighted upon a hope. Remembering how kindly she had always spoken of M. de Nesle, I asked her if she had not many friends among those in power now. She shrugged her shoulders and smiled.

"I have friends everywhere, madame," she said—"friends at the Jacobins and friends at the Assembly. What would you? All the nation are my friends. Also, madame should remember that it is the *people* who are in power. One of the legislators himself, in pleading for the life of a suspect the other day, said that it was to the 'humblest and most unknown citizen' that he 'prostrated himself.'"

This was so mournfully true that I could not forbear a sigh.

"Annette," I said, "amongst all those humble and unknown rulers, do you think you could find one who would have the will to set free a friend of mine?"

Annette laughed, and then suddenly checked herself. "Is it M. le Marquis?" she asked.

"Yes, Annette, it is M. de Nesle."

"I heard that he was safe in La Force—*le traitre*," said Annette.

Her words were barbarous surely, but I have a fancy, as they were spoken with a seeming effort, that the malice was not for M. de Nesle, but for the woman whom he loves. However that may be, I bit my lip and was silent.

"Does madame love this gentleman devotedly?" asked Annette.

"You know that I am betrothed to M. de Nesle," I answered.

"Ah, to be sure!" said Annette, with a mocking gesture, "and madame's love goes always with her troth. I think I can



secure the freedom of M. de Nesle, but it will be difficult. I must make conditions."

"And what conditions?" I asked her shortly.

"Madame must promise to wed M. le Marquis as soon as he is set at liberty."

"I don't know how that can be," I replied with some hesitation.

"Perhaps not," said Annette with a cruel smile; "yet there are plenty of priests, and *citoyenne* maidens marry every day."

"Oh well," I answered desperately, "tell M. de Nesle your conditions, and I shall not refuse to meet them."

Annette smiled grimly. "I will do my utmost," she answered. "Monsieur may be too black a traitor for even me to help him."

And whether that may be true, or whether Annette has not the power she would have me fancy, or whether her promises were only made to allure me with delusive hope, I cannot say. Thus far M. de Nesle is still a prisoner.

If I were really in love, as I should have been, surely my dreams and my waking thoughts would be full of my captive lover. This would be such a blessed sorrow that I should gladly court it—should willingly suffer night and day for such a cause. But being what I am, my thoughts are sadly divided between his sorrows and the king's. For his majesty has just been forced into the pitiful extremity of declaring war against his kindred. Could anything be sadder? A lawful king, with his hands fast bound, forced to ask leave humbly of the Assembly to make war upon his own blood?

We feel at times that our death-warrants are signing. There is little dancing save to the music of the *Carmagnole*, and that is truly a death-dance. All our hope has been in Brunswick and the *émigrés*, until his majesty declared them his enemies. Oh, may God grant that they read the king's heart truly! for our eyes are still strained toward the borders.

Oh for a day of the Great Louis! It would be so easy to do so much. For the very extremity, the license on every hand,



has drawn sober-minded folk to love the king more heartily. The National Guard are Feuillants, and daily grow more loyal; and since the constitution has been signed, even many *émigrés* have returned. The king would have a powerful party, if he had strength to use it; but I sadly mistrust he will still make truce with the *canaille*.

June 13.

But his majesty's will is not yet dead, and hope awakes in our hearts.

The sovereign Assembly had, after much debate, granted the king a *veto*; and then it transpired that *veto* did not really mean the power to forbid. It was an empty word—a ghostly sound which, when the king laid his hand upon it, vanished into air. So long as his majesty yielded every point to the Assembly and the people, this right of protest still remained to mock him; though I wot well there are many, many things which my king has been compelled to grant sorely against his judgment and his will. But the *will* of a saint is one thing, and his conscience is quite another; besides, there are limits to human patience even in a king. With all his indecision, neither fire nor sword would drive King Louis to transgress the decrees of his conscience. *That* is more sovereign than even the sovereign people. So far he is a *hero*.

So when the Assembly asked him certain things which went against his conscience, he dared to use his *veto*; and that is something to dare in days like these.

And indeed he had good reason for his courage, for the decrees to which they asked his sanction were—that all the loyal priests who would not take the oath against their consciences should be driven from the kingdom; that his own exiled brothers and dearest friends should be outlawed; and that a band of “picked patriots”—twenty thousand—from all parts of France should be called to guard the city of Paris from its foreign enemies.



Now, no one who is not in France, and who does not understand the meaning of a "picked patriot," can understand the meaning of that last decree, or what it would involve to have twenty thousand such as those at our very gates. For "picked patriots" are men who have lost all semblance of human affection—brutal creatures who thirst for blood—thieves and vagabonds and murderers who delight in torturing helpless victims. Then to persecute the non-juring priests because they are true to the Church which he loves, would be to the king like the burning of God's early martyrs at heathen hands. There were many who felt the truth of this, and none more than the *Feuillants*; and no one opposed more warmly than the National Guard the bringing of "picked patriots" to Paris.

To-day his majesty was to give the answer; and I think even the queen was a little in dread of his yielding. But a letter which he received this morning from M. Roland, patriot minister of war, must have thoroughly fired his indignation; for he not only used his veto, but dared the wrath of the people by dismissing his entire ministry. Surely this could have no other meaning than that he meant to force his rebel subjects to do his pleasure.

This is true king-craft, and much fitter occupation to my mind than teaching geography to the dauphin, or making locks with that *scélérat* Gamain. I truly hope his majesty will not trust that patriot locksmith too far; for I doubt not that, like all his class, he has a black, ungrateful heart, and would rather betray his king than die for him.

Just as the twilight had fallen this evening, I strolled out by myself into the garden; for I was wearied with long excitement, and the air was soft and sweet without, while the new, slim moon looked down with a kind, enticing light.

The garden here is not as it was at Versailles; there are no masses of greenery and pleasant shaded paths where one can stray. So I did not like to venture far, although the guards are friendly; and every sound sent a tremor through my heart.



At the turning of a path, as I walked, half in shadow, with my long cloak wrapped about me, a tall figure approached me from a little distance; but when I would have stirred myself for flight I saw that it was Henri Beaupré, and so I stayed my steps. I did so with reluctance and against my better reason, for his presence brought back old memories which I had striven to forget. For though I have seen him through the winter here and there, I have never exchanged with him more than a passing word since I brought myself into such humiliation through pleading for Annette.

The first word that he spoke was to ask me if I would step into the shadow of a clump of trees, where no one would observe me. And when I had obeyed him, wondering not a little at his audacity and my own submission to his will, he went on in low tones,—

"Forgive me, Lady Marguerite, but the king's last act has greatly roused the people. Unless instant measures are taken, all is lost to him."

"Oh, warn him!" I cried breathlessly; "can you do nothing to save him?"

He shook his head. "Nothing but strength of will can save the king," he said; "flight is impossible. It was not for the king's sake that I spoke, madame, but for yours. The king is still the king, and they will hardly dare to do him personal harm. But, Lady Marguerite, why should you throw in your lot with a lost cause like this? If you will give me leave, I will see you safe with monsieur your father, or die in the attempt."

His voice trembled as though he had been a lover pleading with an obdurate sweetheart. *He* entreated for my life as though he had entreated for my love. Never were lover's eyes deeper or more tender. Ah, Henri Beaupré, if you had been a lord, or I a simple *citoyenne*! For as he spoke the consciousness shone clear upon my soul beyond a peradventure that this man was more to me than M. de Nesle—more than all the



world besides—this common patriot soldier. The presence which I had been trying for so long to bar from my heart, without giving it a name or looking at it openly, was his. Now it came and looked me in the eyes, and I was so desperate that I did not care.

So I did not answer him at once, trying to fancy that I was not what I was—that we two stood together in some quiet valley, a mountain stream flowing with a plashing sound, which was only the trickling of the fountains, in truth, and that nothing stood between our hearts but our own free wills. And standing so, I wondered, not at all about the rising of the people, but whether one's heart always beats so quickly when one is really in love, and one's voice falls faint for happiness.

I was calm, and even smiled a little. It was well for me that I could keep from my lips the thought that was in my heart. All that I spoke of it was this,—

"If I were a *bourgeoise citoyenne*, instead of the Lady Marguerite," I said, "all that would be easy, and I might flee, Henri Beaupré."

Whether he read any meaning deeper than my words which could not be explained by the barriers raised against the fleeing of aristocrats, I cannot say. He cried in a sort of reverence, as though he might have been praying, yet with the eagerness of a man who loves, "O my God, *how* easy it would be!"

"You are kind," I said then, rousing myself from very shame, "to care for my safety. It is not because I would not trust you, Captain Beaupré, but because, although a woman, I can still be true. I will live or die with my queen."

"*Mon Dieu!*" he cried, "she does not think what it might be to fall into the hands of the queen's enemies."

At first I trembled; it seemed as though he were appealing from me to God. But I knew that God also—his God and mine—wishes us to be faithful to our trust; and in the light of my acknowledged love it seemed easy to bear and be strong—even death grew shadowy and dim.



So I answered with a little smile,—

"And what if one does fall into the hands of queen's enemies, Monsieur le Capitaine? Does one ever fall *out* of the hands of the good God?"

His eyes lighted suddenly, but he did not smile.

"God be praised! you are always in that keeping," he answered.

"Then harm that *seems* to come to me, in God's hands is not real harm," I said. "Will death even be terrible, if God holds me? Even if death came *so*, with a little stroke of the axe, do you think I could bear it, if God held me close?"

When I looked up in his eyes asking this, he groaned; and then I thought I had been cruel, not being a simple *citoyenne*, to give him pain which I had no right to comfort. For he turned a little from me, and began pacing to and fro in the moonlight; and from sympathy with his fear, a little shiver ran also over me. Then I roused myself, remembering suddenly that this man could never be a lover of mine, love him dearly as I might; and that even now, since I looked my folly in the face, I might learn to over-live it.

"Captain Beaupré," I said, "even if I did not love my queen, I could not disgrace my name by fleeing from my post. A soldier ought to understand these things. You see, oh! you must see, how impossible it would be. Some things are far *less possible* than death. I am a woman, but I have my honour at stake; and how would you, monsieur, flout at the tempter who tried to save your life at the sacrifice of your honour?"

He groaned again, but his eyes dwelt upon my face in a sort of rapture, for which I freely forgave him, knowing that he was unconscious of it.

"I had not realized that a woman like the Lady Marguerite could be so strong," he answered mournfully. "God save you, dearest lady, since all my help is vain!"

"It is only God who can save," I answered; "and since I am always in his keeping, whether for life or death, you need not be distressed. For the rest I thank you truly."



And so I slipped back into the palace, leaving him in much disappointment and sorrow.

*July 1792.*

That very evening of my last writing I was forced to give up all hope that the king's deeds would be crowned with success. His arm is far too short to save his people. Those who are faithful to a righteous principle seem so often to be overcome by the evil of the world. Sometimes it is the poor Huguenots who are slaughtered by the Church of Rome; and anon it is the Protestants who beat and slaughter the priests that will not swear, as they are doing now in France. And yet we know that those who do such deeds are no true children of God—no true members of any Church—but devotees of evil. They may call themselves Romanists or Huguenots—it matters little; God is never deceived by names, and his children could not delight in shedding blood. I suppose it is the evil overcoming the good for a season; and God's cause, whether in the one Church or the other, will triumph in the end—not Romish nor Huguenot. Not the Church that persecutes, but the Church that conquers evil, will be the Church of God.

His majesty seems conquered for a time by the evil in this land; but there is another land where one is never "overcome of evil."

I had not foreseen the matter so. I thought things could not fail to be better, because the king had dared to stand for the right.

And now everything is lost. We have only to fold our hands and sink lower and lower. Each time we are raised by a transient hope we fall the more surely after it, as the waves of the sea fall when the tide goes out. What boots it to write of such terrible days as the twentieth of June, when there is nothing to alleviate the wretchedness? In a bloody battle, if there are deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice to tell, one's pulses thrill with a sort of rapture. Here there was no heroism but



that of passive suffering. If a hand had been lifted, even in a vain defence, I could better bear to write of it.

Everything was very quiet on the evening of the nineteenth. We breathed freely too; for the king's deed had been done, and yet the sky had not fallen. St. Antoine was still at home, and the stars shone.

Alas! St. Antoine was only making ready.

All through the day which followed one could see that something was in the air. Before noon Annette informed me that there was to be a national rejoicing—a May festival—that afternoon; she might not return until late. I looked a little incredulous, I suppose, the season being late for May festivities.

"Madame need not astonish herself," said Annette, as though she had read my thought; "one can hold festival at any season in this blessed year of liberty. Life itself is a festival."

"I do not find it so, Annette," I answered her.

"No," replied Annette, with calm complacency; "madame has *had* her dances. *Les aristocrates* dance but little now; they do not love the music of the *Carmagnole*. Yet still there are many dancers left, and it is quite as well that some should look on and pay the fiddler."

"Annette," I said quite gently, although I was angry, "you have grown so insolent that I shall be glad if you will keep to your dancing altogether and quit my service for the future."

But, alas! I drew my courage from the step which the king had taken, and I was yet to learn what a false hope it would prove to me.

For Annette laughed mockingly in answer.

"Madame does not keep pace with the times," she said. "The day when ladies can dismiss their maids is over now in France—the hour struck long ago. I hope madame will have a cheerful afternoon, and hold a festival in her heart."

Annette's eyes gleamed at me with malice as she withdrew, yet even her withdrawing was a pleasure. Eye-gleams never kill, and one is not really the worse for them.



The sun was high by this time, and the day was very warm. There was such a crowd of people abroad that it became manifest some festival must have drawn them together, though in whose honour it was hard to say—at least it was no saint's day. The air seemed full of presage, and the distant cries of the people made one think shudderingly of other days which one would fain forget. The sounds seemed doubly ominous in face of his majesty's late measure of dismissing his constitutional guard to pacify the people.

It was not long that we were left in doubt as to what the tumult meant to us. The sounds came nearer and nearer, with a roar as of the oncoming tide, or of beasts of prey that have burst their chains. We were gathered in the *salon* of her majesty, overlooking the gardens and the terrace *des Feuillans*. There were others besides myself whose faces had grown white with fear, though some, like M. d'Arblay, could still laugh the matter off, as though it were a jest or a popular demonstration at the worst.

Her majesty was very calm, with that air of being resigned to the worst, of expecting nothing, which is settling more and more upon her face. But when, looking from the window and watching that ominous cloud of dust which heralded the coming of the people, we saw it suddenly at our very gates, and heard the multitude shouting in our ears, then she also changed colour, and I saw her lay her hand upon her heart. I wonder if she remembered then that day, a year ago, when the same crowd had thirsted for her blood. Never was there a sweeter woman who was more sincerely hated.

By this time some one who wished to please the multitude—and there are always these—opened the palace gate to let in those who wished to “remonstrate with his majesty.” In a moment all the avenues were alive with the overflow of St. Antoine and St. Marceau; with the faces that one sees at these times and no other,—faces which have no look to make them seem as though God could have made them—malicious,



blackened, foul—such a terror to the vision that you close your eyes through fear.

The gardens were swarming now. The windows being open, unclean odours filled the very chamber. All that remained was for some friend of the people to open the palace doors; and, strange as it may seem, that friend was found. I was so unnerved that, seeing this last act of perfidy, I gave a little cry of fear. Her majesty looked at me with gentle reproof. She desired greatly to go to the king; but her friends entreated her with tears not to throw away her life by such a reckless act.

"What have I to fear?" she answered calmly—"the being killed? It is as well to-day as to-morrow. What can they do more? Let me go to the king—that is my place. My duty calls me there; and if I must perish, let it be at his side."\*

I remember her words, because they spoke to my heart and gave courage even to me. For the rest my memory is confused, and I do not recall with clearness how things came to pass. I know her majesty did not go to the king; I think it was impossible. Also at this moment a few grenadiers of the Filles St. Thomas arrived directly from the king for her protection. Some of the officers put her majesty and the children in the deep embrasure of a window, rolling a heavy table before them. Some one—I think it was M. d'Arblay—pushed me also in beside them. There I sank on my knees at the queen's feet, and buried my face in my hands, waiting in breathless suspense. For we heard the ringing of axes and shouts of the people all about us, and knew that we only waited our time.

I have no thought of how long that waiting was—endless it seemed to me. Then the tramping of feet resounded on all sides, and horrible oaths, and the air grew foul and close with many breaths, and my head reeled with faintness. I waited every moment for a blow upon it, shrinking within myself, and wondering in a childish way how it would seem, and if the pain of it could be borne without a cry. It was strange that

\* Weber.



so heroic a mistress could have so cowardly a maiden. Once or twice the queen's hand gently touched my hair; and when I raised my face and saw how calm she was, I tried to be more brave.

It lasted three hours, I think—the misery of it—but it seemed like the years of one's life. The torment to one's whole nature was bitter as death itself. The foul words which were thrown at her majesty surpass all thought or fancy. And all this time she sat serene and calm, with a faint colour in her cheeks, and quiet, steadfast eyes—with queenly dignity, which even the rags of St. Antoine would have striven in vain to hide.

At one time a woman, no worse than the rest, handed her majesty a filthy red cap, and asked her to put it on. With a faint smile, and a graceful motion of her hand, the queen turned slightly and set it upon the dauphin's head. A huge, rough man—a brewer I think he was—was standing guard over the table. If he stood there for her majesty's safety, at least he seemed to find much cause for humour in the insults offered to her. However, seeing her place the cap on that beautiful little head, he cheered aloud, and said in an undertone to the queen, “Madame, this people loves you very dearly, if you would only believe it.”

From love like that, which shows itself in such unseemly fashion, may the dear saints guard her well!

As for the king, I shall never think of him henceforth save as a hero. Even M. d'Arblay, who told me the story, gave him this title; and coming from such a source as that, it has tenfold significance. When his majesty heard the rabble beating on the doors of the chamber where he sat, he himself ordered them to be thrown wide, that all might enter. And then he rose and confronted them, with their pikes and axes, as calmly as if he were only waiting at a *levée* for his courtiers to enter and pay their homage. The unruly mob brandished their weapons in his face, and clamoured loudly for a repeal of the veto. It has been my king's custom heretofore to yield to all these popular demands—indeed, this has grown to be the



habit with others besides the king, so that the *canaille* have only to raise their voice and all those who seem to be in power yield obedience; but his majesty told them calmly now that this was no time or place for making such demands, and he would not answer them. He was entirely fearless and calm, and really seemed to have no concern for his life. Why is it then that, being so brave to endure, he has no strength to put an end to all this wretchedness?

"Do not be afraid, my king," a grenadier whispered in his ear, when some dastardly fellow aimed a pike at his majesty.

"Lay your hand upon my heart, my good friend," said the king, "and see if it does not beat as calmly as ever."

And so it did.

Well, it is over now—for a while; but when shall we have another day like that, I wonder? and how many days will it take to make an end?

Since M. de Nesle has been in confinement, M. d'Arblay has seemed to haunt my footsteps, and that day he followed me continually with his eyes. After it was all over, and we had grown a little wonted to the terrible recollection, I met him one evening where I could not turn away.

"Marguerite," he said, putting forth his hand to detain me, "you are looking pale; I trust you are not ill."

"Do you think, monsieur," I answered, "that one could be in robust health after the affectionate manifestation of your friends on Saturday?"

"God forbid," he cried, colouring violently, "that you should think I approved of the deeds of Saturday. It is true that every poor man is my friend; but the poor are often carried by their suffering beyond the bounds of reason. Even such a shameful scene should move us to pity for their degradation and wretchedness."

"One should have the heart of an angel then," I answered shortly.



"And after all no harm was meant to the king or queen," he continued; "for with full power to work their pleasure, they pleased simply to look and pass on."

"Then, monsieur," I said, "since you are pleased that the king's life should be in the power of the lowest rabble, it is idle for us to waste words. You are worse than that arch-traitor Lafayette, who could at least turn his cannon upon rebels."

"Ah, Marguerite!" he cried, seizing my hand, "do you think it was not torture to me to see you exposed to insult and to danger?"

"You forget, monsieur, that there *was* no danger," I answered gently, disengaging my hand from his clasp; "and as to *my* life, that was the least concern of all. The demon which you, and others like you, have called up is not likely to be laid by quiet words."

"You are pitiless," he answered.

"Perhaps so," I said quickly; "this is a good time for learning such lessons. And I do not wish compassion for myself from a man who had none to show for his queen."

"Why do you hate me so," he said then, turning suddenly upon me, "when I only long to protect you? Your face is the most beautiful on earth, but the venom of your nature is inconceivable."

"You have not begun to fathom it," I answered, smiling a little; "but I can assure you well that a beautiful face is worthless without a tender heart. And even if hearts are tender, to make fast friends one should have some bond of sympathy; and I do assure you, Monsieur d'Arblay, there is not one feeling in my soul in harmony with yours—no point from which we could claim kinship. Listen! there is a beautiful woman of whom I have heard you speak; a woman of whom you cordially approve—she 'fires men's hearts,' I think you told me once—the wife of that patriot minister whom the king has just displaced. Do you know what she said when they told her of



the queen's sufferings on Saturday, and of the insults heaped upon her? She clasped her hands in ecstasy—I have no doubt, monsieur, that they are beautiful hands—and cried, “Would God that I had been there to behold her misery!” I was there, Monsieur d’Arblay, and beheld the misery, and a more pitiful sight could not be seen under God’s heaven. A woman like Madame Roland is after your own heart, monsieur. Find some true patriot *citoyenne* who can exult in the misery of her queen, and you will be in tender sympathy with each other.”

“I don’t believe that Madame Roland ever said such words,” he answered excitedly. “But that is neither here nor there. You know well that there is only one woman in all the world to me. You have yet to do the deed that can turn me from you. In God’s sight I swear that I love the king—that I abhor these deeds of violence. If I say, too, that I love my country, why should you misjudge me? The enemy are closing in on every side, and there are traitors in our own camp ready to sell us into their hands—Lafayette the greatest of them all.”

“Ah, then, thank God for that!” I exclaimed. “But did it never strike you, monsieur, that you yourself are a blacker traitor than M. de Lafayette? He has left his command, they say, and hastened like a brave man to protest against the insults offered to his king. In my heart I forgive him all his sins, since he risks his life to atone for them. But you, monsieur, eat the king’s bread daily, while your heart is with his enemies.”

“I eat the nation’s bread,” he answered hastily, “and my heart is with my country.” But as I only smiled with some disdain, he began to tell me with much enthusiasm of some signal which had been raised in Paris proclaiming the country in danger, and of the multitudes which were flocking to answer the summons; as though that were a matter to make one eloquent.

In danger, indeed! one would think so, with an imprisoned



king, and the government in the power of criminals and assassins. It is well that one has found it out at last.

But to me it becomes clearer every day that those who make most cry of danger only wish an excuse for outrages and crimes. It seems that a young deputy from Marseilles by the name of Barbaroux, in a frenzy of patriotism, has been sending to his native city for six hundred men "who know how to die." This seems to be thought a most heroic deed, yet I doubt not each of those six hundred Marseillaise will know far better how to take some other life which is worth more than his own. This morning they arrived in Paris, and one who can judge has told me that they are "mere galley-slaves and scoundrels." Surely we had enough of such already.

Now God speed *les émigrés* and the blessed army of deliverance!



XXV.

*"COUNTRY IN DANGER."*

*July 1792.*

IT was Sabbath morning—almost mid-day indeed. Manon had returned with Félice from the little chapel, her heart filled with the good pastor's words of peace. And while she was busy with her housewifely cares, her thoughts had been more intent upon her heavenly citizenship than her earthly one. Though a little heavy at heart, she had even been tempted to sing, because the sun shone and the love of God surrounded her. Her chief source of sorrow was that so much seemed amiss with the Sabbath. All the world, in eagerness for the rights of men, seemed to have forgotten or ignored the rights of God. The Legislative Assembly went on with its sessions, and the churches were almost deserted. That being so, Manon was more than ever anxious to nourish the spirit of prayer in her own heart. Who but God could know whether his few faithful ones might not be still enough to save the land?

While she turned these matters over in her mind, with now and again a tender word to Félice, Mère Gascoigne passed by, and called to her through the open window.

"Why do you tarry at home?" she cried. "Don't you know they are proclaiming the country in danger?"

Manon flew to the window. "Oh, dear neighbour Gascoigne," she said, "is there anything new since morning?"

Mère Gascoigne paused a moment, with her arms akimbo. "You live so in the clouds," she said, "that you never know what passes down below. 'New!' no—it's old enough, *mon*



*enfant.* King and aristocrats plotting within, and foreigners laying siege without, while you are busy with your prayers. Shame on you for a lukewarm *citoyenne*, who does not deserve her freedom!"

"Oh! dear neighbour Gascoigne," said Manon deprecatingly, "I trust there are true men enough to save us yet."

Neighbour Gascoigne laughed bitterly.

"We are not going to trust to them," she said; "we shall every one see with his own eyes that there are no plots brewing, and that all men do their duty. Let the Assembly look well to itself that the enemy comes no nearer."

As Mère Gascoigne walked rapidly away, Manon, with Félice clinging to her skirts, went out to the porch and stood gazing into the distance. An undefined fear filled her heart as to what this proclamation might mean. She had learned in these days to question the meaning of things; they were often so different from what one might expect. In fact Manon was more and more in a puzzle as the weeks went by. The ever-present difficulty of reconciling "liberty and fraternity," as interpreted by the Jacobins, with one's duty to God and man, and her love for her husband with her moral disapproval of his character, filled her with dismay. She had not fully understood before her marriage the meaning of a Jacobin; now her vision had grown clearer.

Mère Gascoigne's injunction that the Assembly should "look well to itself" had impressed her curiously. She had no question whatever as to the meaning of that. She herself had seen, only a few days before, how the deputies were obliged at all times to "look well to themselves." She had seen how the Plain had been trampled upon by the Mountain, and how both had been over-ruled by the threats and imprecations of the galleries. Yes, she had no doubt that the legislators would be forced to submit; but whether France would be the better for such submission, seemed an open question to Manon.

While she stood there, shading her eyes, and thinking her



own unimportant thoughts about the gravest questions, she could hear the firing of guns, and shouting which approached her. She had an instinctive fear that if the crowd passed by it might be expected of her as a good *citoyenne* to join it. This fear would naturally have sent her back to the getting of her dinner; but being a brave little woman, she deliberately stood her ground. And at last the same Parisian mob appeared to which she had grown so used; and following after these, to the delight of Félice, a brave procession of municipal officers on horseback, with brightly-waving scarfs and floating banners. Almost in front of Mère Gascoigne's shop the procession paused, as it did at every corner, while a herald sounded his trumpet, crying with a great voice, — "Citizens, the country is in danger!"

In danger! It had seemed a treason to Manon to admit this to herself; but it was a brave and gallant deed that the *nation* should declare it. Manon's heart, though it wavered sometimes, was fired by this grand array. She forgot for the moment all her doubts and misgivings. Could any harm to the nation emanate from the nation itself? Must not all real evil and danger be the fruit of foreign influence, aristocrat plotting, the bribery of English gold?

There were women besides Manon that day whose hearts were fired with zeal. All day men sat in the recruiting stations, and volunteers poured in by the hundreds to the aid of their threatened country. Stirred by the sight of the danger-flags, women who had sons offered them freely, and even in true Spartan fashion forced them to go, with a blessing. As to Manon, her enthusiasm had only reached the height where she might perhaps have been willing to sacrifice herself, but not another.

Knowing well that neither her father nor Jacques would return for dinner, she sat down at the table with Félice, who meanwhile looked at her with eyes which were full of questions.

"Mama Manon," she said at last—this title being of her



own choosing—"what is it puts the tears in your eyes? Is some one else going to God?"

Manon smiled; the child's words were to her heart like a gleam of sunshine.

"People are always going to God, Félice," she said; "the way is very straight. We must be watchful that our hearts are clean when he calls us."

"How can we wash our hearts, Mama Manon?" asked the little one.

"Jesus Christ washes hearts, Félice; but if we do evil things, or think angry thoughts, they become soiled and stained again."

"Oh!" said Félice softly, a little shadow crossing her face. "Is yours quite clean, Mama Manon? and do you think God will call us to-day? I had a naughty thought this morning, when the ugly man came for grandpapa, and I pinched his leg as he went up the stairs."

"That was a naughty deed as well as a naughty thought," said Manon, her heart in secret sympathy with the child. "If you ask the good God, he will wash the sin away for Jesus' sake. Now, Félice, the sun is so pleasant, let us go and have a little talk with Pasteur Leroy before the service begins."

Félice rose with joyful readiness, for the errand pleased her. The child's cheeks were rounder than they had been a year before, for Manon's marriage had brought somewhat more of plenty to the household. If bread was as poor as ever, there were still other things which could take the place of bread. So as they went through the crowded streets, Félice tripped along with something of the buoyancy of childhood. There was a brave array of people abroad, but every one seemed angry or sad, as though each had a personal sorrow at his heart. The signal guns boomed constantly. The beating of drums, and the distant sound of the herald's trumpet, sent a thrill of fear through Manon's breast, but were a great delight to Félice. The child looked back even with a little sigh as they turned



into the quieter street which led to the chapel. A sigh was the warmest protest ever offered by Félice.

However, she loved the old man, who took her on his knee, and when he caressed her she cast down her eyes demurely and smiled. He asked her if she were a good little girl to-day, and she answered without hesitating an instant,—

"I was naughty this morning; but I prayed a little, and God washed my heart again."

The old man looked at Manon and smiled.

"That is faith, my child," he said, "the faith of the apostles and prophets. 'Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him.'"

Manon smiled sadly. "I ask for blessings constantly," she said, "doubting all the time if I shall receive them. When everything looks dark, how can one see to pray?"

"We do not pray by earthly lights," the old man answered. "Let us learn to pray in the dark if we must; there is light where God is. Let us pray for our *highest* good: so far we can always see."

"Our highest good," she repeated; "but you do not mean only the highest good of *you* and *me*? May one not pray for France, dear sir? Whatever is becoming of her now?"

"The country, my child, is strong," he said cheerily; "she will march bravely against her foes. So long as she does not forget God, God will remember her. When God was for Israel, Israel was valiant."

"And God is for us—God must be for us?" she questioned breathlessly.

"Be sure that God is never on the side of tyrants," said this gentle old man.

"But one hears, one cannot help hearing, of terrible things which the people do," said Manon falteringly.

For to Pasteur Leroy, who lived mostly within the four walls of his study, who saw only the poorer members of his flock, and suffered with their sufferings, one could say much. And yet, at the same time, one might be doubtful if he were over-



wise to answer. Manon was not doubtful ; she listened to his words as to an oracle of God.

"My child," he said, "the people are neither saints nor angels ; they are suffering fellow-mortals."

"But the twentieth of June?" asked Manon faintly.

"'The twentieth of June!' ah yes!" and the old man rubbed his forehead as if seeking to remember. "That was the day of the oath in the tennis-court—a glorious proceeding!"

"But I meant, dear sir, the twentieth of June which came but a few days ago," said Manon again.

"Ah yes, my child ! I remember—the people went to visit the king. I have been told that they were a little tumultuous, but all the journals say that no harm was done. In fact, my dear, the *Moniteur* said that they showed great self-possession and kindness. Let us hope his majesty was touched by such a spectacle of a suppliant people."

"I didn't know," said Manon meekly. "I had no one to tell me truly, but I heard that some people tried to kill the king."

"Kill the king!" repeated the good old man ; "why, my dear, the people *love* their king. If they had tried to kill the king, they would have been guilty of a terrible crime. Do not fret over idle tales. Think less of the nation and more of God's suffering poor, who, man by man, compose the nation. Rest in peace with God thyself, and leave the ordering of nations to a wiser head than thine. Neither thou nor I, with all our striving, can shape the destiny of the land."

And since that was true, and since moreover his words had stilled a little the tumult in her soul, Manon went home that afternoon with a lighter heart. Pasteur Leroy should know better than any one, and he seemed well content.

The days were not many between the twentieth of June and the tenth of August, but even so short a time as this may hold much of joy or misery ; and the outlook for the king grew darker day by day. It became so manifest that St. Antoine



would not submit to trifling, that his majesty, much against his will, yielded at length to the prayers of the queen and wore a quilted cuirass under his clothing. Marguerite's fingers bore their share in the secret stitching of that quilted cuirass, and she set her stitches with tears. Yet she had heard that the darkest hour came just before the dawning. Could the king's fortunes sink lower or the hour be darker than now?

How clear the light was shining off on the northern horizon, over quiet woods and meadows and peaceful homes!

Marguerite's ears were alert to catch the signs of danger. The office of watch-dog was the only one remaining to her now which might be of service to the queen. The National Guard—too surely proved Feuillants—had been dismissed, and their places were filled by men who would at any time open the gates of the palace to a suppliant mob. Pétion, who had praised the kindness and moderation of the people on the twentieth of June, had been reinstated by public acclamation as mayor of the city. His majesty might still keep his excellent appetite, but joy had faded from his countenance, as well as hope from his heart.

All that remained of the old court-life were his majesty's *levées*. There was no mistaking the men and women who attended these, when the fact of their presence in such scenes compromised them beyond the hope of remedy. They had thrown their last cast, and the king's fortunes were their own, for life or death. The French nobility, like Gideon's army, had been tried and sifted well, and all who were doubtful and "faint-hearted" had fallen away.

The last *levée* which King Louis ever held was given on the fifth of that month of August. It was a brilliant gathering, we are told. The dull and sombre rooms of the old palace, which had so displeased the little dauphin, shone with many lights, and became fair with beautiful faces and brilliant jewels. This was the bravest assemblage to be seen henceforth in France until Madame Tallien should give her gorgeous entertainments,



where beautiful women should wear the flowing robes of ancient Greece, and go shod in classic sandals.

The queen's face was pale that night, but it flushed at times with a vivid crimson, the token of repressed emotion. Sorrow had touched the beauty of her features, but had rather augmented her gentle dignity and the sweetness of her smile; for this woman was destined to be a queen upon the scaffold as well as on the throne, and to turn even the Conciergerie into a sometime palace—a woman with great ambitions and loving desires, who could yet lay a strong hand upon her heart and be still. She could see her husband fall short day by day in the performance of that which in her eyes was his kingly duty; could feel the *king* stirring in her own heart—the impatient agony of desire to act as kings have acted; and yet could crush down her disappointment for the sake of her wifehood, and become more true and tender towards the man who had failed her.

Marguerite, from a window-recess, stood looking out upon this brilliant gathering with eyes of pain and wonder. She knew that the king, even while she had been drawing hope from his firmness, had himself abandoned hope. She knew now that he had written to his confessor even before that terrible day in June: "Never have I had so much need of your consolations. I am done with *men*; I must now turn my eye to Heaven. Sad events are announced for to-morrow. I shall have courage."

The tears filled her eyes as she looked at his good-natured, melancholy face. She wanted to kneel and kiss the hem of his garments, even for the sake of this power of loving endurance, this self-abnegation for the sake of right and conscience, which at times aroused her anger.

"Mademoiselle, there are tears in your eyes," said a voice close at her ear.

"Monsieur d'Arblay!" she cried with a little start; "are *you* here?"



"I am, dear lady," he answered.

"And by what right, I pray you?" she demanded in soft, imperative tones. "Go and join your friends who are hounding on the people against his majesty."

"I have no friends who are opposed to the king," he answered.

"Do you know what you make me think of?" she went on, heedless of his answer. "I do not mean to be irreverent, but I can't help thinking it. Do you remember there was a time when the sons of God came to appear before him—those who were loyal, true of heart—and Satan came also among them, the adversary, the false one."

"Mademoiselle, you are kind," he said. "I have never been visited with such opprobrium before. But I have serious business with you; I am not jesting."

"Neither am I jesting, Monsieur d'Arblay," she said. "I should not dare to jest with words from the Holy Book. But I declare that you have no right at the king's *levée*, where only his faithful lovers have leave to enter, and his right loyal subjects."

"Loyalty is a matter of opinion," he answered; "and faithfulness is proved by results. But I have a thing to say to your own self, Lady Marguerite. The king seems determined to pit his power against that of the people. It was most ruinous policy to dismiss Pétion from office."

"Pétion! that brutal wretch," cried Marguerite, "who flattered the people upon their kindness in not killing us all!"

"Mere words, mere words," said D'Arblay, with a sweep of his hand. "There are times when the people must be humoured. The enemy are pressing us on every side. Brunswick has issued a threatening manifesto—"

"Thank God for that!" she interrupted softly.

"And in the face of all this, mademoiselle, the king refused his subjects the safeguard of an armed force about the city."

"An armed force!" she repeated bitterly; "well, the armed



force is arriving notwithstanding, Monsieur d'Arblay, and the six hundred men who know how to die are already here. Do they please you? For my part, I think it behoves us *all* to learn how to die, right speedily."

"This is not what I had to say," he rejoined.

"I want you to tell me this," she asked gently: "are you yourself a Jacobin, Monsieur d'Arblay?"

"I am a patriot," he answered, flushing slightly.

"And a Judas also, I believe," she added in soft tones, but very bitterly.

"I believe," said D'Arblay with an oath, "that God never made a woman with a harder heart than yours."

"Ah, no! you do not believe that," she answered with quiet contempt. "My heart is full of the tenderest charities by the side of the hearts of some of your friends—women who can cry for aristocrat heads, and even feast upon hearts."

His face flushed hotly again, and he answered with much passion: "I am not defending wretches such as those—God forbid! I am thinking what you will do, Marguerite, if you fall into their hands. The worst is yet to come. Is it not better even to be my wife than to be torn in pieces, as some have been?"

Marguerite shuddered at his words, but she answered with calmness: "I have been taught that there are other things far worse than death—sin or shame."

"Is there sin in this—in being my wife?" he asked with passionate wrath.

"There might be shame," she answered gently, "in wedding one who was not true, and sin in wedding one I did not love."

M. d'Arblay swore angrily under his breath.

"You don't know your own heart," he cried. "You have set yourself to hate me against your conscience. If you cannot love me, then it is because you love some other man."

"You know," she answered, "that I am betrothed to M. de Nesle."



"You will never swear to me that you love M. de Nesle," he answered with intense scorn. "I have watched that little episode, and my eyes seldom deceive me; you yourself are too true to do so."

"All the same I have promised him," she answered quietly, her eyes wandering over the room meanwhile as though seeking some means of escape.

"Then your own words recoil upon yourself," he answered fiercely. "It is sin to wed a man you cannot love, and yet you will be guilty of that sin. There lies a deeper truth behind all this—you love some other man."

"Because I cannot love *you*, Monsieur d'Arblay?" she asked with quiet scorn.

"But I have at least your promise," he continued, ignoring this. "If you are in danger, I shall be at hand for your succour. I am very forgiving, Marguerite."

And this Marguerite had good cause to remember.



XXVI.

*MANON RECEIVES A GUEST.*

*August 1792.*

IT is now three weeks since they declared the country in danger, and I am often afraid that the presence of this threatening evil is hardening people's hearts. They are like a herd of cattle in a panic, not knowing what they do. No one can blame them much, with the enemy pressing close, and traitors like M. de Lafayette basely plotting to betray them and carry off the king. But one must needs blame those evil men who try to incite them to greater anger—men who write such things as I read in one of the journals a few days ago; who say that "the people may find themselves reduced to the cruel necessity of dipping their hands in the blood of conspirators."

Jacques is so strangely excited that for the past week he has even forgotten to be patient with me. I say for him, as I do for the poor people, "It is a fever in his blood; his love for the human race has driven him mad." For what with permanent sessions night and day, and deputies continually coming and going, he has never a moment's peace.

I am getting to know the deputies by sight and name, as I know my sins, those especially who come here after Jacques—Manuel and Isnard and Merlin and Chabot, and that ill-savoured butcher Legendre. Then there is M. Séchelles, who is very fine-looking, and to whom the queen showed great kindness in other days, of which I am quite sure he has lost the



recollection. Is it right, I wonder, that patriotism should make one forgetful of favours? There is one poor fellow also for whom I have much compassion. He is a paralytic, and seems so helpless that my heart grows warm towards him. This infirmity, being sent of God, should make him tender-hearted; and I rejoice to say that he has much care from his friends.

I watch them as they go out and in, and have my thoughts about them. Surely they are sacrificing much and labouring hard for the welfare of the nation. I sometimes go to hear the discussions at the Assembly, just to please my father; for he seems feeble this summer, and I dislike to refuse the favours he asks of me. I can imagine that a wise man might find food for thought in what is said; for some of the deputies use very learned speech—above all, that party whom they call Girondists. They talk much of things which happened long ago in Greece and Rome, as though everything which is doing now in France could be likened to something which was over long ago. Jacques says this is true eloquence; but Henri says that to his mind it would be greater eloquence if they spoke more plainly and to some good purpose. For my part, I cannot think that any heathen nation could be a pattern for us; and it is wearisome to hear overmuch of Catiline and Brutus, of the Senate and the Forum, to one who is not wise and does not understand.

Then forty or fifty members will sometimes speak at once, which is confusing.

Jacques is not a Girondist; he belongs to the Mountain, and he says the men of the Mountain are the truest patriots. They have all the common sense and discernment on their side, and if France is saved at all, they will save her.

They have at least very loud voices, and much faculty for making themselves heard. Yet I cannot help wishing that Jacques were on the other side. I suppose, since my judgment is only that of a woman, it is better for me to abide at home; for it seems impossible that the "sense or discernment" of any of them should avail, when the crowd in the galleries has liberty



to shriek continually, if anything offends them, "Down with the speaker! *à la lanterne!*"

Even my father is not pleased with that. But Jacques says father is not the patriot that he used to be; that since he has belonged to the Municipality he is too fond of thwarting the popular will. Those are Jacques's words; and also yesterday morning he assured me that M. Marat had his eye on my father. The idea of having those hideous eyes upon one who is dear to you is appalling. It made me shudder.

"I should like to know the reason, Jacques," I said. "My father has always been a friend to M. Marat, though indeed I never could see why."

"Be careful how you speak, Manon," he answered, turning quickly upon me, and with more harsh a manner than he had ever used with me. "Those who are not patriots in these days had better keep their lips closed."

Jacques was shaving before the little mirror which stood on a table by the window, and as he spoke he used his razor with so much vehemence that I really feared he would draw blood.

"Why, Jacques," I argued gently, "where could you find a more ardent patriot than my father? He has cried down the court and upheld the nation from the first."

"Words are nothing," said Jacques. "Men may use brave words who are poltroons and cowards when it comes to deeds, like your fine dandy general who has been standing his trial."

Knowing how Jacques hated Lafayette I dared not answer, although I had heard my father say, that in spite of all his treachery, M. de Lafayette had faced the Assembly with the courage of a brave man.

"Your father has too tender a conscience," said Jacques sneeringly; "consciences are at a discount in these days."

"O Jacques!" I cried pleadingly, and I ventured to lay my hand upon his arm, "I pray that *you* will never do anything against your conscience."

"Bah!" said Jacques, casting off my hand, "my conscience



never troubles me. Manon, thou art too wise a woman to meddle with matters above thee. Leave such talk to the unsworn priests, of whom, by the way, the nation will presently make an example."

My heart ached so at his words that I threw my arms about his neck, and began to sob with my head on his shoulder.

"You never spoke so unkindly to me before, Jacques," I said. "Is it then because you have ceased to love me?"

"Don't be a child, Manon," he answered, kissing me somewhat more hastily than was needful. "Because I speak my mind, must I have ceased to love you? This is the time for a woman to show her true character. In the very forefront of our patriots are the *women*—the noble *citoyennes*—spurring men on to noble deeds. But these are not women who sit over the fireside and weep for their husbands' sins. *My* wife, when she should show herself the bravest, holds back in fear."

"I am not holding back, my husband, truly I am not," I sobbed; "I am willing to give even my life for my country."

I do not doubt that in saying this I used a worthless argument. But Jacques could not know so well as I how tired I am, and how aimless my life has grown. How much better and worthier a life it seems, that Lucile is living now.

"Look at Annette," said Jacques again; "it makes a man brave only to see her face. Look at other glorious women who frequent the Assembly—Jeannes d'Arc of the eighteenth century, every one of them."

"Jacques," I said, "my heart is tender, and heavy too, for the people; you know it well. But oh, my dear, do not you dip your hands in any human blood which may cry out to God against you."

Jacques laughed bitterly. "Those are very pretty sentiments," he said, "and deserve to be recorded. They are quite Girondin in their tone: the *sentiment* of the Girondists is always beautiful, but their *deeds* have yet to be noted. Manon, was there ever a people set free without bloodshed? Even the



human race could not be redeemed without it. What would you? You cannot have a revolution without victims."

That he should compare the murderous deeds which are doing now with that one perfect Sacrifice!

"*Marchez! qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons!*" sang Jacques softly as he put away his razor. "It is the impure blood which needs shedding, Manon, to make the land clean."

Every one now knows the words which Jacques sang—they are on every tongue. They say that those six hundred men for whom Deputy Barbaroux called came all the way from Marseilles singing them. But after all, watering furrows with the blood of others is quite a different thing from giving one's own. After Jacques had gone, and while I still sat weeping, my father came to my room looking tired and hurried, and carrying a coat upon his arm which had come to grief in the press of people. He had some electoral meeting also upon his mind, yet all his own thoughts did not hold him back from marking my grief and the tears in my eyes.

"Why art thou in sorrow, daughter?" he asked, after pointing out to me the long uneven tear. "This is no time for foolish weeping, when other women are speeding away their husbands and sons to fight the Austrians."

"O father! my heart fails me," I said; "I am not brave at all." I dried my eyes to thread my needle more quickly, and as I did so I noticed that the coat was dingy and worn enough for the truest patriot to wear.

My father walked to the window and cleared his throat. He has changed in the last few years, and is not so irate and bitter in his hatred as he used to be.

"It is just as well for a woman to have some heart," he said at last. "Leave vengeance to God and his ministers."

"O father!" I cried, "do not you be one of the ministers; do not *you*, at least, have *your* hands stained with blood."

"It may be that the land will have to be purified," he answered, and I thought he spoke with reluctance even so.



"There are enemies of the country from whom there is safety only in cutting them down—sacrificing one life to save a hundred perhaps. Frenchmen will not march against the Austrians, leaving an Austrian committee at the palace, and their wives and children at the mercy of their foes."

And as my father spoke—rather, I think, to reassure himself than with a thought of persuading me—he turned upon me a look which I shall always remember; a look as of some hunted animal, or rather of a soul in torture and conflict which is past the hope of succour.

"Dear father," I said then, beginning to sob afresh, "Jacques was telling me but a few moments ago that M. Marat has his eye upon you. Oh, do beware of that terrible man."

"How! what! Marat!" he cried, stopping suddenly before me; "what is that about Marat?"

"He says that you thwart the will of the people, father."

"I thwart the will of the people!" cried he; "the people have no humbler servant. Have I not in the Municipal Council submitted meekly to all their requests? What have the people to urge against me?"

"It is M. Marat who distrusts you," I repeated.

"Marat has an evil heart," said my father. "Marat would verily kill his mother if he had one."

He laughed in saying this, but none the less he seemed to be irritated and troubled. I think he knew Marat too well not to put some faith in Jacques's words.

He walked up and down a few minutes longer, until I had finished his coat; then he said to me, as he put it on,—

"About Marat, my child—it was just as well to mention it to me, but keep your mouth close to others. The cause of France is the cause of right, and the cause of right is the cause of God. Marat is a low, sneaking fellow, and thinks of naught but carnage; it is Danton's head that will rule."

"Is M. Danton a merciful man, my father?" I asked.

"Mercy is not the quality most to be admired in heroes,"



said my father with a bitter laugh, as he turned to go ; " but it is an adornment for a woman, Manon. It is well for a man to steel his heart."

" O father ! " I cried, clinging to him as he reached the door, " beware lest the day may come when hearts shall be steeled against yourself."

At this he turned and drew me to his heart with greater tenderness than he had ever shown me before. Félice had stolen in long before this, and looked on with wondering eyes. Her presence is always a joy, and all through that day she comforted me. For whether I was busied about the house, or chatting with the little one, there lay a weight upon my soul like a burial pall, shutting out God's dear sunlight. A shadow with a covered face stood beside me, shunning my glance ; and when I tried to hold it and look in its face, there were always the eyes of M. Marat and the anger of my husband.

It is sad to be so short time a wife and to have come to this !

Two or three times through the day I caught Félice in my arms and buried my face in her bosom ; and when she asked merrily if I loved her more than yesterday, I could not answer. It seemed as though Lucile sent me comfort through the child.

When it began to draw toward sunset Annette appeared. Though she brought *bonbons* for Félice, and stooped to speak to her, yet I thought she seemed a little wild ; at least her hair was tossed, and her eyes had black circles around them. She laughed when I spoke of it, and seated herself at the window, so that she could turn her face away as she talked to me.

" I thought perhaps you had not heard," she said, " that Henri goes to-morrow."

" Henri ! To-morrow ! Where ? " I gasped faintly.

" Are you always in such a haze, Manon ? " said Annette scornfully. " Where is every one going now ? To fight the emigrants to be sure. Do you know that the country is in danger ? "

" Oh yes, I have heard it," I said impatiently ; " one hears nothing else."



"And well they may," she retorted. "Have you seen Brunswick's manifesto, as they call it?"

"I don't care for manifestoes," I said, half-sobbing; "tell me about Henri."

"You don't care!" repeated Annette, looking upon me as though I had been an aristocrat. "I will at least tell you what it means. On the arrival of Brunswick and the Austrians, all Frenchmen who are not aristocrats are to be taken to the plains of St. Denis and every tenth man executed. All the best patriots who have loved their country, and hated the king, shall be broken on the wheel. Does that mean anything?"

"It is terrible, Annette!" I replied, only half heeding what she had told me. "But Henri—did you say to-morrow? Oh, *that* is terrible too!"

"Terrible?" cried Annette, turning fiercely upon me. "Terrible for a soldier to serve his country? It would be *dastardly* if he stayed at home."

And she looked upon me with absolute scorn when I answered faintly, "So many stay at home."

"What do *you* know of suffering?" she went on; "you have no conception of either love or hatred. Even if he met you, as he did me, but now, and thrust you from him with his eyes while he spoke to you, you would do naught but sigh upon it. I tell you, Manon, I hate him, and I vow he is no true patriot."

"Annette," I cried, "you are beside yourself!"

"Perhaps I am," she answered; "that is the order of the day. There is one other whom I hate even more than Henri—the *citoyenne* Marguerite. But I have most sweet revenge," she added, laughing, "every day of my life—a gentle, womanly revenge, which one does not call by its name."

"Tell me," I cried, "or will you be unkind even to me?—will Henri come to see me?"

"You foolish thing!" she answered, with more kindness in



her voice, "how should *I* know what Henri will do? If he does, and if you love him, Manon, keep him until it is too late to do aught but return to his command. I charge you this." Her eyes gleamed as she turned them toward me, and she spoke below her breath.

"But, Annette," I ventured doubtingly, "would you warn me truly?"

"Yes, I would, Manon," she answered, "in *memory* of my love."

Her words troubled me, and I was glad that she did not stay to repeat them to Jacques. It was best indeed that nothing further should arouse him, for when he returned he was so far penitent as to have some pleasant words for me. But when we were about to rise from table, he said abruptly, "Your brother marches to-morrow, Manon."

Being by nature outspoken, I could not refrain from saying, "I have heard it, Jacques."

"Have you seen him then, perhaps?" he asked me, with quick suspicion. But when I had denied, he did not press me further, remarking only with something like a sneer,—

"It is better for such as he to fight the Austrians than to abide at home."

This puzzle kept me busy long after Jacques and my father had gone, and Félice was sleeping quietly in her little bed. Why was it better to fight the enemy on the frontier than to serve the country in Paris? At least, why was it better for Henri, and not better for Jacques? Moreover, was there any special reason why Jacques should wish to take Henri from me? And beginning thus to harbour suspicions of the man whom I had sworn to love, I became wrapped in grief both at my own distrust and at the reasons which had given occasion to it.

Finally, as the full moon was rising over the Hôtel de Ville, I heard a step at the door which I knew as I know my own heart; a firm, quick step, which has no counterpart in all the world to me. I hastened to open the door, but when I looked



in Henri's face I had no word of greeting. I could only throw myself in his arms and lie quite still.

"Oh, shame, Manon," said Henri lightly; "what evil bird has croaked before my coming? The frontier is not far to seek, and you must not doubt of victory."

"I am grown faint-hearted," I answered, drawing him into the little sitting-room; "I doubt of everything."

"No," he answered gently; "not of God."

"O Henri!" I said, hesitating to speak my thought even to him, "is God pleased, do you think, with what men are doing now?"

"Why, how could that be?" he answered cheerfully. "What are we at our very best that he should be pleased with us for our doings? But surely we do know, my sister, that he can make 'the wrath of man to praise him,' and the 'remainder' he can 'restrain.'"

"Yes," I replied obstinately still; "but for all your trustful words, dear, you know right well that you are only speaking so to give me better cheer, while you yourself, perhaps, can see no ray of hope beneath the heaven itself."

"When hope dies, and God fails, let us give up all for lost," said Henri quietly; "but God never will fail you and me, Manon."

"Henri," I asked quickly, "are you glad to go?"

And Henri sighed at my question. I am sure he had not meant to do so, but the weight at his heart was too heavy to be borne without.

"Manon," he said, "you ask very difficult questions. Let me fall into the hands of any inquisitor but you. Glad! yes—to serve my country, and to be away from this. But for other reasons I am much perplexed. It had occurred to me to think that I might be needed here. But I suppose no man can know where he is needed, even if any one of us can be sure that he is *needed* at all."

"Won't you tell me, dear?" I asked, drawing closer to him,



and laying my cheek against his hand. "Why did you think you should be needed here?"

Henri looked me through and through, as if he were trying to prove whether I could be trusted—I, his sister, who have loved him all my life.

"Poor little Manon!" he said, stroking my hair, "are you as happy as you fancied you should be?"

"O Henri!" said I, "is any one ever as happy as they hope to be? Is not everything an illusion, but just the blessed Golden City and the kingdom of God?"

Still Henri stroked my head, and said nothing but, "Poor little woman! God help her!"

"Do you suppose all marriage is like this," I said,—"a sort of thing that will not bear the light?"

"God forbid!" he answered with much earnestness, "since marriage is of God."

Then I began turning about in my mind how I should say the thing which I had to say, and which was hard to put into words.

"Henri," I ventured at last, "Jacques does not love you very well."

"I never supposed," said Henri dryly, "that either one of us wasted much affection upon the other."

"But oh, Henri, if you should be *suspect*, or if in any way he should work you harm?"

"God pity you, dear heart," said Henri gently, "if you have already come so far as this! Do not fear for me. I have as strong an arm as Jacques, and am as true a patriot."

"Yes," I answered; "but will you meet fraud with fraud, and guile with guile, if any of these cruel men should cast their eyes upon you, *mon Henri*? Ah! no, no; I should rather see you dead and laid beside Lucile."

"Manon," said Henri, smiling but very sadly, "do you remember how a certain good man with his servant was once surrounded by an enemy's host—thousands against two? And



do you remember how, with the eyes of faith, the good man saw the chariots of the living God arrayed upon his side? Who were the stronger then—the two men, or their enemies?"

"Henri," I returned, "do *you* remember all the slain of the St. Bartholomew, and all the martyrs who have entered heaven through fire and sword?"

"Yes!" cried Henri; "through fire and sword, Manon, but they *entered* all the same"—his eyes flashed, and there was a strange ring of triumph in his voice—"more than conquerors through Him who loved them."

We were both quiet for a long while, my hand clasped in Henri's and my head upon his shoulder. The full moon filled the chamber with a beauty like that of heavenly things, and we had no light besides. At last I asked him, "What was it, Henri, you were going to tell me? Why did you think you might be needed here?"

"To protect one who is dear to me," he answered. But he spoke quietly, as though the dear one might have been no dearer than another.

"Is it the Lady Marguerite, Henri?" I asked; "and why does she need protection from you?"

"All aristocrats will soon have need of protection, Manon," he said. "And I tell you this in order that, if you should be able to help her, you will do it for my sake."

"There is nothing, however hard, that I would not do for *your* sake, Henri," I answered him.

He sat for a little longer, and at length, when he rose to go, suddenly Annette's warning came to my mind, and I begged him to return at once to his post.

He smiled incredulously, and asked me who had been vexing my mind with imaginary perils. And when I told him, he only laughed, and said that without doubt Annette had reason for her words, if it were only a *woman's* reason. And so we parted, with many tears on my side and much tender encouragement on his.



It gave me some comfort that just as Henri was leaving my father appeared, and I saw them press each other's hands in the dim light, and heard my father's blessing.

*August 10.*

I have never written upon these pages heretofore in such a state of grief and fear. I don't know why I write; a wiser woman *could* not, I suppose. But if I walk the floor, I grow weary; and if I sit still, my reason seems departing. And now Félice is sleeping quietly, and the house is very still.

After I had parted with Henri on that other night, I tried, I remember, to comfort myself with godly verses and trustful thoughts. I charged myself with undue anxiety over things which were past my understanding; for it is hard for a woman to judge who sees but one side of a question. And I remembered, with a comfortable sense of quiet and rest, how a "thousand years are as one day" to the Lord, and how he holds the great universe in the hollow of his hand.

Since then the days have gone so slowly. Yesterday was warm and pleasant, and the sunshine tempted me abroad, and yet I lingered. My pretty little neighbour from two doors away passed by quite early in the morning with a basket on her arm, hasting to make her daily purchases before the sun waxed hotter. She smiled when she saw me at the window, and stopped a moment to chat about this and that—how her little boy had cut a tooth without her knowing it, and how well some new play had gone off at the theatre the night before. And I tried to listen as best I might, being heavy at heart, and not caring for theatres.

"Indeed," I said at length, "I am so concerned about my country, Madame Fabre, that I care little for amusements, and such an ungodly diversion as the play was never to my liking or my conscience."

"The country!" cried she, with a merry little laugh. "Ah, Saint Jacques! what has the country to do with you and me?"



All I care is to have a good time in it. I never mind public matters, nor read the journals. But Paris never was so gay before; it is charming to see the cotillons out of doors every evening, and the lights gleaming through the trees. Ah, madame, you are quite too *triste*; you should go abroad and be merry."

But I suppose I might go abroad as much as Madame Fabre herself and not be merry. As to the rest, I think it is not wise for people to be too light of heart when God's hand is heavy on them. But I reflected that this little woman might be quite as well for not reading the journals. I wish sometimes I could never see them myself. But when they lie about so constantly how can one help looking? and Jacques brings home so many. There is *Les Révolutions de Paris*, which I do not like at all, although M. Prudhomme is often very *drôle*; and Camille Desmoulins' *Discours de la Lanterne*, for which my husband writes at times, much to my grief and shame. But worst of all there is that atrocious *Père Duchesne*, and M. Marat's *Ami du Peuple*, which I use to light my fires, but never glance at the text.

But having a patriot husband and father, my case is quite a different one from that of Madame Fabre. Even if I had not always loved my country dearly, I must needs care, being in the midst of things. But I know there are hundreds of quiet little women who live their comfortable daily lives without giving a thought to either Jacobins or Austrians. If the sun shines, and the daily bread is not too bad, they are happy. They have not the evil eyes of M. Marat fastened on one they love; and doubtless their husbands have not changed as mine has done. All this has come to me through the sorrows of the nation.

Yesterday was like other days, but very long. Though I had the same duties as before, there had never seemed such a waste of time in which to do them. My father was home at dinner-time, but he seemed sad and depressed. I think that apart from the trouble on his mind he is greatly overworked, and he



is growing too old to have so much upon his shoulders. All the city, in these days, throngs to the recruiting stations; and what with raising an army to fight the Austrians, and committees in session night and day, there is never any rest. A young man like Jacques may bear this burden of overwork for a time, without other result than an irritable temper, but with an old man like my father it is another thing.

After a few moments the little Félice walked over to him softly and laid her hand upon his forehead, asking him with a sympathizing smile if it ached very badly, and if she should put cold water upon it.

"Daughter," he said then in solemn tones, stroking the little one's hair, but turning to me, "for many years I have cursed the aristocrats in my heart; but now I declare to you, there never was a blacker tyranny under heaven than the tyranny of the Jacobins."

"Why, my father!" I cried, "have you come to this?"

My father wrung his wrinkled hands together like a man in great extremity who is not conscious of his doings.

"I am too old," he said again, "to bear the burden of it; too near the grave to stain my hands with blood."

"My dear father!" I cried in terror, "surely you have no blood upon your hands."

"If I have not," said my father drearily, "I have it often on my *conscience*, and that is well-nigh as bad. O my God! it is just as bad. I'm a poor old sinner, and a cowardly sinner, Manon. I can't resist the will of the people, or withstand the pressure."

I could see that his hands trembled, and for one moment he bowed his face in them as weakly as a child. But when I put my arms about him, and begged him to remember that God was stronger than the people, he would say nothing further, only he kissed me as he used sometimes when I reminded him of my mother.

There seemed a presage, a boding in the air, all through the



day ; and all last night the tocsin rang, and Jacques did not return, or my father. I could not sleep, but tossed restlessly beside Félice, listening to hurried footsteps in the street and the ominous gathering of people. Toward morning there were cryings in the air which at first I did not understand ; but when I had risen and stood listening at the window, I caught the words distinctly, "To arms, citizens ! to arms ! they slaughter your parents, your brothers, your sons !" The words seemed more terrible for the darkness, and as I could not know what they might portend, they filled me with a great alarm. *My father, my husband*, might even then have fallen under the vengeance of the aristocrats !

But when the gray morning dawned at last, and I saw all St. Antoine rushing past my window, my fears were suddenly reversed. I remembered what the journals have said of late about the right of all good citizens to visit the king—"that fear of the people is an insult to the people ;" that a "prince's dwelling should be open like a church, for the poorest and most needy to wander out and in : " and I thought these words were bearing fruit.

And yet there may be truth in them. It is a beautiful thought, that as the lowest of us may go at any time to God and ask him to supply our needs, so should we go as freely to our earthly king. But when M. Desmoulins writes that the tocsin should be rung to gather the people, and that every man, as in that old heathen Rome, should have power to put conspirators to death, that was a different thing. That was throwing fire-brands about and driving men to evil deeds.

The sound of the tocsin in the stillness of the night is a fearful thing to hear. It fills me with awe and mysterious horror ; for when the bells toll while all the world is quiet, it seems as though they were tolling just for me. I know it is only a call to the people when the nation is in need ; yet it is the same cry that was sent forth by the bells of St. Germain so long ago, and it brings terrible scenes to my mind.



The night was very beautiful—the moon was just waning, and there was not a cloud.

Toward morning I heard Jacques's step on the stair. I threw an old shawl about my shoulders and ran down half-way to meet him. He started back at sight of me with a hoarse laugh, which came haltingly to his lips.

"Why, Manon, is it you?" he said in something like the old kindly fashion; "you should be sleeping quietly in your bed."

"O Jacques!" I said faintly, "there are so many strange noises, and the tocsin is ringing."

"Yes," said Jacques shortly; "it will ring to some purpose this time, Manon."

Through all the heat of the August night I shivered at his words.

"What does it mean, Jacques?" I said, clinging to his arm and trying to read his face.

"It means," said Jacques, "that the people are indignant at the treachery of the king."

He spoke with a sharpness which surely I had not deserved, being myself neither an aristocrat nor in any way a lover of the court. Yet it may have seemed to Jacques that I cared too little for the indignation of the people, for I asked with a little sob of horror,—

"O Jacques! will they harm the king?"

"That depends upon the king," he answered laughing. "Get thee to bed, Manon, and dream thou art a free woman."

That was early this morning, while the dawn was gray. After Jacques had eaten and departed again, I sat with Félice in my arms for hours together, trying to pray, and fearing I knew not what. We were far from the palace, and yet not so far but that the wind brought us tidings. I tried sometimes to go about my work, but my heavy heart made a slow foot-step. As the morning wore away, and our own little street grew quiet again, I said sometimes to myself, "Perhaps Jacques was wrong: the people love the king better than he thinks."



And then I would speak cheerfully to Félice, and we would have a little laugh together, which, although it had no meaning, helped to lighten our hearts.

After a while, however—it was still in the forenoon, if I remember well—I heard a distant sound of cannon, which brought me to my feet and sent the blood coursing to my heart. Could it be possible, I said to myself, that the people had dared to attack the king? or was the king so cruel as to shoot down a harmless mob? As the firing increased from moment to moment, my little Félice became white with fear, and I was fain to try to comfort her; but before she was well solaced, I think—though I kept no count of time—I heard cries and shrieks and the tramping of heavy feet almost without the house; and I knew that men were killing each other, and that I might have to see. And I wondered if the nobles and the Swiss were cutting down the people, as Jacques had often told me they would love to do.

While I wondered, a crowd of men ran past the very doorway after a poor Swiss soldier; and I turned away from the window, for I could not find it in my heart to see him killed. And so the moments slipped away, and the noon-tide had passed, and already the shadows grew longer.

The firing had ceased, except that now and then I heard a distant shot. It must have been nearly three o'clock, when I heard some one trying the door of my little back kitchen. I hurried to open it, and having a strange dread of what might meet my eyes, I charged the little Félice that she should not follow me. Then, as well as I could for trembling, I undid the lock; but it lingered in the turning, and I seemed to myself like one who works in a dream—not doing what he would, but only striving vainly after it.

“Ah, hasten, dear madame!” cried a voice close to my ear; “hasten for love of the good God!” And nerved by the pleading voice, and I trust also by “the good hand of my God upon me,” I threw back the lock and opened the door. A poor red-



coated Swiss staggered into the kitchen and almost dropped at my feet. His face was ghastly pale, his right arm hung helpless at his side, and his clothing was stained with blood.

"Dear madame, for God's love," he repeated, "give me a moment's refuge, and the good God will reward you!"

And although I knew that it might be accounted the duty of a true patriot to leave him to his fate, yet I felt that *my* duty, as a child of God, was clearer still. While he spoke, I heard steps and voices in the street; so as he could not mount the stairs for weakness, I drew him quickly into my father's room, which is on the lower floor, and closed the door upon us. There I washed the blood from his wounds, and, having slipped out to pacify Félice, I found some old linen with which I bound up his broken arm. So when he had kissed my hands, and blessed me many times, he took a little hot broth which I had brought him, and then slept from utter exhaustion.

I have passed in and out watching him all the afternoon, until just at sunset he roused himself from a troubled sleep; and then I sent Félice to sit with him, while I set myself to prepare his supper.

Truly I made great haste, for I heard her busy little tongue within the chamber flying too swiftly for either prudent nursing or wise precaution. But when I had hastened back, my face glowing from the coals, my wonder was great to see her little face nestling close by his on the pillow.

"Dear maman Manon," she cried, springing up, "do you not know this dear man with the red coat? He was so good, and he is sick."

The poor fellow smiled. "It was in the garden," he said, "when madame had the little one to see the fountains." And then I remembered the Swiss guard who, so long ago it seems now, held Félice in his arms. And I think we were all glad of the memory, for he seemed no longer like an enemy but an old-time friend. And though we are bidden to be good to our foes, it is human nature to love our friends.



He ate the food which I had brought him, and after that he seemed to gain strength to tell me something of the scenes through which he had passed—how the people had forced the king to leave his palace, and the Marseillaise had begun the trouble by firing on the Swiss ; and how when the Swiss were defending themselves and the château, the king had sent a message from the Assembly Hall that they should fight no longer nor fire upon the people.

"Ah, madame," he added with great sadness, "it were better to have died fighting than to be cut down like beasts."

"But it would have been of no use," I answered, being sick at heart.

"Use!" he cried, his eyes flashing ; "we could easily have conquered, if the king had stood by us ; we would have driven off that rabble like a flock of sheep, or died to a man." He fell back exhausted then, shuddering and closing his eyes. "There were rivers of blood," he groaned—"rivers of blood. Paris is red with it now."

He seemed faint, and I took him a little brandy, for which he thanked me mutely with his eyes ; and when he slept again I put Félice to bed, and then brought my writing, that I might sit and listen. And if only my father is the first to return, I am sure he will be merciful toward a fallen foe who is already half dead with his misery. Or God's release may come first to my poor Swiss ; and he would rather have it so. I think he is grieved to be alive, for he said to me, that after being years in the service, it was hard to survive such a cruel disgrace ; and he added in a lower tone, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."

"That is true," I answered : "'the Lord is a strong tower to those who trust in him ;'" at which he smiled feebly and answered,—

"I have trusted him for twenty years, my child, and it won't be long before he has need of me."



XXVII.

CONQUERING THE KING.

MARGUERITE'S STORY.

*August 1792.*

I HAVE lost—for ever, I suppose—the journal leaves which I began to write four years ago with such a happy heart, thinking, alas! that my foolish memories might serve in some small way at some distant time to aid her majesty. And now they have either perished in the flames, or some evil-hearted Sansculotte has made merry over them. But the hours drag so heavily that, having pen and paper close at hand, I am forced to write again, lest despair and idleness combine to make me ill.

I doubt not I am faring quite as well as my dear mistress, being not, at least, a prisoner of the Jacobins. That I have not met with such final wretchedness, I owe to M. d'Arblay; and yet truly I had far rather suffer with those I love than be in bondage to such a man as he. He is too tender a jailer, and my door is never ajar. He has even lost the trick of growing angry at my foolish words, and the most cruel things that I can say win only a smile in return. When I beg for my liberty, he assures me I should meet with speedy death if I did but show my face upon the street, and that my only possible chance of safety is through him. And everything that M. d'Arblay says, the woman who is my keeper says again. She nods her head and assures me that monsieur is right—death lurks in every corner, and no aristocrat is safe. She is a good woman, I think. I often see her weeping and suddenly drying her



tears. And her husband is dead. I have no doubt he deserved to die, for he hated the king; but his wife has a kinder heart. I believe in her soul she loathes the deeds which are being done.

She has given me her cheeriest room, and at night she draws in a little cot for herself and sleeps beside my bed. For she says that fine ladies are used to attendance, and she cannot watch over my comfort unless she is near. But the idea is not her own; she is only obeying the commands of one above her. However, she sleeps soundly. It is I who lie with open eyes and watch over her.

And now to tell my story. All last month, while the *fédérés* were coming, our doom was really sealed and our sentence spoken. I know that I myself felt like one at the point of death, with every sense so sharpened and acute that nothing which I heard was lost upon me. There were such various stories afloat that one could not credit all. Some said that the *fédérés* were only called in order that the Jacobins might have their camp of twenty thousand patriots, despite the *veto* of his majesty. Others would have it that they were to march straight against the enemy on the frontier. Some of them truly marched as far as Soissons, but more abode at Paris. That desperate band from Marseilles, who had no other enemy in view than king's friends and aristocrats, had a quarrel the very day of their arrival with some loyal grenadiers of the Filles St. Thomas, which caused much bloodshed. For in these days one may not even love the king without being called to suffer for it. These Marseillaise were stationed very near the palace, for which, I doubt not, there was abundant reason. Vicious-looking men they were, who were already used to robbery and murder. They were not even wholly French, I think, for I have heard that there are many foreigners in those southern towns. Ah, sweet Sainte Marguerite! do such men as these assassins know so well to die!"

At least I am sure of this, having proved it true—they know



well how to deal out death to others, and have no scruples such as brave men must allow in cutting down defenceless enemies.

On one of those days in early August, having so many troubles and fears at my heart, I was seized with a longing to tell them to some one else than the worthy *abbé*. And I remembered that the kind old *pasteur* had bidden me to come to him in trouble. It was not easy to leave the palace without being seen, when so many eyes were watching—guards on every side, and *Marseillaise* at the very gates ; but as the National Guard had grown kinder and less mindful of our movements, I resolved to venture. So, wrapped in an old cloak of Annette's, I made my way into the gardens and past the sentinels. M. d'Arblay himself, I think, would scarcely have known me—or one other who has keener eyes than he. There was no reason why I should not have passed for the humblest *citoyenne* ; yet many people eyed me curiously, in despite of my disguise. Some savage-looking men at a street corner pointed at me and spoke to each other, as though there might be an atmosphere about a court which clings to one even in a borrowed cloak. I walked on quickly, keeping closely in the shadows and not daring to raise my eyes. Every lantern that I passed seemed to bring me visions of those who had suffered. What place is there, indeed, in all the land which can now be free from visions ? or what spot in all the city for a tender, upright heart ?

Presently I was lost in a crowd—and such a merry crowd, which danced and laughed as though life were all a holiday. And I remembered suddenly how *my* life used to be just like that four years ago—a thing of dances and frolic and joy. And perhaps these people were no more foolish, dancing gaily under the trees in the soft summer weather, than I who danced away the night and morning hours in the *salons* at Versailles. I thought so *then*, wondering to see them so merry. *Now*, I think there was all the difference which lies between innocence and guilt in their merriment and mine—the cruel people !

After the terror of my coming the very sight of that old



pastor's kindly face was like a balm of healing. He took me into a wretched little chamber, which was truly like to a prison cell.

His smile when he spoke to me seemed to make a radiance in the place. It made me think how the face of the good Moses shone after he had talked with God.

I told him how dark my life had grown, and how I stood in constant dread of greater evils; how, finding no earthly help that would avail, I had been minded to turn to the Lord; that I wanted clearer light and teaching where I groped still so blindly. I told him all this with little pauses, into which he put no word, listening only with the quiet smile of one whose peace is well assured.

And when I ceased at last he answered, in the words of the Holy Scriptures, I believe, "'What time thou art afraid,' my child, 'trust in the Lord; he will deliver thee.'"

"Yes," I answered with some despondency; "but does he always deliver from danger even those who love him best, good father?"

"That rests, my child, upon what you count deliverance. If *death* is the chief enemy we dread, then no. He does not always deliver from that. But since he has conquered death, what then?"

"But from suffering," I said, "and desolation and loneliness?"

"Yes, that is the deliverance," said the good old man, with a sudden lighting of his face. "No life filled with the presence of the Lord can be lonely or desolate. Suffering and loneliness and death become beautiful. The Lord Jesus was lonely; he suffered; he has died. His love takes the pain from suffering and the sting from death."

"I don't understand," I said; "that is spiritual, and I am so earthly. To me, suffering and fear remain."

"It is the *fear* from which Christ delivers," he said. "It is not death which is harmful to his children, but the fear of it. My daughter, if you would find the true light, flee from evil



influences. It is a hard thing to follow Christ in a palace ; it is harder still to seek the true faith in the haunts of Papistry. 'Come out from among them, and be thou separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.'"

"Oh !" I answered with a little smile, his reasoning seemed so strange to me, "if you could but know how saintly is the life of his majesty ! And the blessed Lady Elizabeth is more like an inhabitant of heaven than of earth."

The old man smiled, but shook his head at the same time with gravest apprehension. "I have no doubt," he said, "that there may be some even in the Church of Rome who strive to walk after the teachings of Holy Writ. And there are many others who by their fair semblance make one to remember that even the evil one may be 'transformed into an angel of light.' We must remember that there is 'no other name under heaven' wherein to trust but the name of the Lord."

And as he spoke I remembered a picture which used to hang in my father's little chapel in those old happy days—a picture of the dear Lord with his hand on the head of a little child, looking upon it with eyes of tenderness and help. I was weak as a little child, and with the same eyes he seemed to look on me. I believed that his arms were strong enough to hold me through every peril, and on that surety of help and love I cast my helpless soul.

"I will trust in the name of the Lord," I said softly.

"And his arm will uphold you," he answered.

I turned to go then, feeling that my heart was very full, but he stayed me with his hand upon my arm.

"I wanted you to flee from the allurements of the palace, my child, but I meant to offer you a refuge. If you had not come here to-day, I had it in my mind to go seeking you ; and that not that the thought had occurred to my own wisdom, but was suggested by another."

"By another !" I exclaimed in great surprise.

"I have had a visit to-day from a young friend of mine," the



good old man continued as I tarried. "To tell you the truth, my child, I am a little absent-minded, and forgetful of details, though I never forget a face. He is going away either to fight the enemy or on a mission for the nation, and he came to say farewell."

He paused for a moment here, and I sat in great astonishment, waiting to hear what this patriot visitor could have to do with me. I like not patriots—those who fight the Austrians, or who go on missions for the nation.

"Ah well, my dear," said the old man again, wiping his forehead with his hand, "he also spoke of the perils of the palace. I am afraid, however, that although he is a godly young man, he was thinking more of the peril to this worthless mortal life, and less of the peril to the soul. My memory is confused, as I was at that moment pondering over the death of Socrates, and contrasting it in my own mind with the deaths of many of Christ's true martyrs. But he recalled to my mind the time when you came here before; and I remembered well, for even then you were groping for the light."

I also remembered, and a rush of many feelings with the instant knowledge of whom M. Leroy was speaking overcame me. I turned my head and sat gazing from the window, while the tears gathered on my lashes. They might have rolled down my cheeks and I think my companion would not have been the wiser. "If I understood aright," he continued, "this young friend of mine was under some indebtedness to you; you have at some time befriended him."

I tried to laugh, but the tears choked me, and my laughter turned to a sob. "It is all the same," I said; "only it is I who am indebted to M. Beaupré, and he who has befriended me."

M. Leroy gazed at me for a moment much perplexed, then slowly shook his head. "It could hardly be, my daughter," he answered then, "that a man of the people could befriend a palace lady. However, we will let that rest. He asked me if



I could shelter you, in case you needed a protector. I told him that the nation was the true protector of those in trouble; that you could not find a safer refuge than the arms of the nation. But since this assurance did not give him the comfort that it should, I promised to seek you out. Indeed I could do nothing less; for when I hesitated but a moment, not knowing what protection one could need now that the land is free, except against the Austrians, he answered with some vehemence that he had rather trust you to Brunswick's army than to the tender mercy of the nation. I was deeply grieved, my child; and I mention this that you may guard your tongue, lest you should be the cause, even unwittingly, of leading true-hearted young men to revile the nation."

What answer could one give to such an admonition? Then as the twilight was beginning to fall, this good old saint with quiet courtesy took down his hat and insisted upon walking with me to the palace gates. "For, my dear," he said, quite simply and as a matter of course, "your gentle bearing and your beauty shine forth from the folds of your poor cloak, like the moon athwart dark clouds. It is such faces as yours which will be missing in regenerate France, where all are free and equal."

The dear old man, wrapped in his Bible and his prayers, takes all the idle tales that men tell into his ear without doubt or question. Regenerate France indeed! As we parted, he told me that if the enemy approached the city, or there were serious signs of danger, not to forget that I should come to him, and he would give me shelter. Rather, I think, in the innocence of his heart, he would hand me over to my enemies. And this was Henri Beaupré's brave protector.

But, alas! I had never known until that moment how much I had trusted to his own protection in the days to come, as though one arm, however strong, or one heart, however tender, could serve for succour in such days as these.

That same night, as I was passing through the corridor, on



my way from her majesty's apartments, I saw a man's figure half hidden in the shadow of some heavy tapestry. I started back with a low cry, for the light was dim, and only the distant footstep of a guard fell upon my ear. But though taken unawares, the first sound of the voice which called my name brought all my courage back.

"Pardon me, Lady Marguerite," it said, "but I march for the frontier in the morning."

He spoke in a low voice, and did not offer to approach me, standing with his head thrown back, and a certain defiant tenderness in his eyes, as though there had been some tangible barrier between us. And my sorrow at his going came over me afresh, and took away all anger which I might have felt at his presuming to seek me so.

"Ah! I see, Captain Beaupré," I said, forcing a smile, which God knows was wedded to misery; "you are going to fight against the blessed *émigrés*, and to crush the last hope of my dear, sorrowful lady."

He did not answer at first, but stood gazing at me with the same steady look, which deepened into one of pain.

"I am going to fight for my country," he answered, "and for my king, Lady Marguerite."

"Yes, so men call it," I answered with an unsteady sort of laugh. "But if you think it is the king's service when you make war upon his brothers, ask your own heart, Henri Beaupré."

He came a little nearer then, and spoke with desperate earnestness.

"I cannot argue with *you*," he said; "I can only plead my cause, as I might with the king. A soldier has no choice but obedience; and yet, if you condemn me, there is no appeal—I am guilty."

These were strange words for him to speak to me. They seemed too near to words which any other man who was my equal might have spoken. They either meant nothing at all but



a courtier's compliment—in which case he was bold to speak them ; or they meant far too much for me to listen, unless I were minded to listen to much more than this.

"I have no right of condemnation," I answered gravely. "If every soldier should do his duty it would be well for all."

I had a fancy that he would tell me of what he had said to the good old pastor, but he did not ; only, after a moment's hesitation—

"I wanted to be sure that you should know," he said, "if you were in danger, and I failed in knightly service, that it was not through fault of mine, Lady Marguerite. May God protect you always!"

"Thank you," I said, and then pausing suddenly I found I could say no more. My words oppressed me and died upon my lips. Anything that I could say seemed little and mean in the presence of such earnestness as his, unless I had yielded to a sudden impulse which almost overcame me, and let him see all that was in my heart. If I had spoken more just then, I should have wept, and my words and the tone of my voice were cold beyond a hope from the very effort to keep back my tears.

But when it was all said, and I had entered my chamber, my heart was more heavy than lead, and I even had my hand upon the latch ready to go forth and tell him that he need not go away with such a sorrowful heart. But that was a wild impulse, since I am promised to another man. In a moment more, when the infatuation was over, I was glad that it was such a very cold hand that he had kissed, and that I had said so little.

And yet, sweet Sainte Marguerite ! I should be a gladder woman this very night if he had held me once in his arms and known from my own lips that I love him. For since life is very short, above all in this regenerate land, and since a woman has but one life this side of heaven, it is foolish not to let one's heart beat while it may.

M. de Nesle is still in the Abbaye prison. The evening before these terrible things fell upon us, some one brought me a



note from him—a crumpled slip of paper, faintly covered with red lines the colour of blood—which filled me with foreboding. He prayed me for the love of Heaven to send him some token of my well-being, and not to cast him from my remembrance.

With the thought of another man in my heart, I could not be so false as to write words of love to him, or gracious promises. If he had been a free and happy man, I should have asked back the troth which I had given him, although it would be of little worth to me. As it was, I bade him have good courage ; that I should always remember him in my prayers.

On the evening of the ninth of August Annette did not appear. It was rumoured vaguely through the palace that there would be a rising of the people. The tocsin rang all night, and yet the crowd seemed very slow to gather ; we hoped, oh, so fervently ! that the call might be in vain.

After I had left her majesty that night, I stood for a moment by a window in the ante-chamber which looked out over the court and the *carrousel*. The night was beautiful, the shadows lying black in the white moonlight. I could hear distinctly all that passed without, and the tocsin ringing like a knell. Underneath the window some Swiss soldiers on guard talked softly to each other. I heard now and then a word of the king, and St. Antoine, and the Marseillaise. “In any case his majesty can defend himself,” I heard one of them say, more loudly than the others. “We will all die for the king.”

And so they would ; I did not doubt it : they have proved it now. So would the three hundred who had rallied round his majesty ; none were braver than they, who, when all fled in fear, had only drawn the closer. How could a king with such loyal servants as his majesty had that night give them over bound unto death ? Was it not better to die than to yield, when yielding costs so many noble lives ? Only the good God knows why my king set so little value on the lives of those who loved him, and so much on the lives of those who thirsted for his blood !

For besides these stanch defenders, and representing, I have



no doubt, many loyal souls all over France, was that band of faithful men and women who stood under the palace windows on the morning of the twenty-first of June, weeping and mourning for the king's humiliation.

As I thought these things, some one passed quite close to me and whispered in my ear, "You will not forget your promise, Marguerite?"

But although I knew quite well who spoke to me, I would not turn to look at him, but leaned further out into the soft night air, watching the lights glitter on the spray of the fountains. Was this the last time that I should see them play, and draw in the free air of heaven? I felt so young, and life was still so sweet.

There seemed to be no tumult; only I could see in the distance shadowy forms moving in the dim light, and nearer yet men gathered in little groups—not noisy ones—and now and then I could hear the shrill voices of women who should have been at rest with their children.

But as the night waxed the tumult increased and the multitude gathered. I rose from my bed after an hour or two of tossing, and sat by my open window. Every Swiss was at his post, and Mandat's National Guard kept the barriers and held the crowd at bay. And I said to myself, "If the Great Louis were here, would *he* think three hundred brave gentlemen and those faithful soldiers too few to crush the power of that insolent rabble? His own right arm and the band of gentlemen would alone suffice."

And then the tears came to my eyes, and I felt as one who has doubted the wisdom and love of the saints, or even of the good God. For what am I that I should judge that blessed saint and martyr, my dear king? I fear I am too earthly to understand aught but a temporal warfare, and count for nothing the strife and triumph of the spirit.

While the hours were still small I was startled by a faint tap upon my door. I opened it with trembling, fearing every new



thing; but only Gabrielle in her night-robe stood sobbing on the threshold.

Now no one was ever more merry from morning to night than Gabrielle; even in the saintly household of Madame Elizabeth her mirth was like a ray of sunshine. But those who are most glad at heart in the presence of others are sometimes driven to the sorest stress of sorrow when taken unawares.

"Ah! dear Marguerite," she sobbed, "let me sit and hold your hands a little while; my heart is very heavy, and I think it will break. Will something terrible happen? Shall we have another day such as we had in June? Do you hear the bells, the dreadful bells!—O sweet Mary mother! I wish I were safe in heaven."

She clung to me like a child, while I tried to comfort her, being greatly in need of comfort for myself.

"I didn't know I could ever be so afraid," she said; "my father used to say it was a *sin* for one of noble blood. Ah, Marguerite, my heart flutters so if I should be a coward and brand my name!"

"I don't think the cowardice of one weak girl would brand a noble name," I answered, cheerfully as I might.

"But I will *not* be a coward!" said Gabrielle, sobbing still; "I hate women who are cowards. I should not be so fearful if I had not sat and listened to my own heart beating with the bells."

"Do you think, after all, I may be frightened for nothing?" she asked at last. "The crowd is very slow to gather, and it is only the tocsin which seems a sound of doom. Marguerite, we have heard the tocsin before—you and I—but I never had such a sinking at my heart."

She had ceased her sobbing by that time, and her voice had grown more hopeful. The tocsin seemed to have so little effect, and it had been ringing now for hours.

"Why can't they let people sleep in peace?" said Gabrielle,



looking anxiously from the window. "Marguerite, do you think most of the queen or of yourself to-night?"

And that were a hard thing to say, for love of life lies deep in all our hearts; and yet I think I answered Gabrielle truly, that I was thinking most of her majesty. For what am I that St. Antoine or any other of them should care to work me evil? But to my dear lady what inestimable woe might follow another rising!

"Well," said Gabrielle, "that is what I try to do, *generally*. My father said before I came to serve Madame Elizabeth, 'Remember, Gabrielle, that you serve a lady of the blood-royal. Forget yourself, forget that you *have* a self. It is the honour and glory of a race like ours to serve the king.' I have not forgotten, Marguerite."

She threw back her proud little head, and her eyes were dry. No one would have thought that Gabrielle lacked in courage who had seen her then. Whether her heart were still keeping time to the bells I know not, but she shed no more foolish tears. She even had her little jest to make presently about the *bonnets rouges* which we could see nodding afar in the crowd in the bright starlight, discerning them clearly by their shape if not their colour. Paris had grown to be a city of night-caps, she said—a city of old women. And just as the starlight began to fade before the gray of the morning, she kissed me, with a little laugh which died away on her lips, and left me to my slumbers.

"I feel quite strong now," she said before closing the door, "and my heart is very quiet."

After that I threw myself upon my bed in utter weariness, and fell asleep.

I know little of all that morning's work, except what my hostess here has told; and she shuts her lips close, and says but little. Also M. d'Arblay has thrown some little light upon my great perplexity.

But what I do clearly remember from my own experience is



this : I was awakened suddenly from my short sleep by the roar of the multitude not far away—that sound which we have learned to know so well ; and as I sprang to my feet, I heard distinctly cries of “ Vive la nation ! ”

I had not undressed myself the night before, and now, seeing that the sun was already risen, I stepped into the corridor, and stood for a moment in the first bewilderment of waking, leaning against the door-post of my chamber. Some one rushed up the stairs—one of the king’s gentlemen, I think it was—and seeing me stand thus, he shook me gently by the shoulder, bidding me rouse myself and flee.

“ Has it come to that ? ” I asked faintly.

“ The king has been reviewing his troops,” he answered, “ and they cried, ‘ Vive la nation ! ’ Troops who cry ‘ Vive la nation ’ will not fight for a king. I am trying to rouse whomsoever I can, to give them a chance.”

After he had vanished my first feeling was one of fear ; then there fell upon my soul that calm which we attain sometimes in a dire extremity, when we look our terror closely in the face and know that it has come. I went slowly down the stairs, counting them step by step. Brutal sounds and angry shouts came in through open windows. There was a noise within of stirring everywhere, and I heard moans and cries of weak hearts overcome by fear.

By the great clock in the hall I saw that it was shortly after six—twenty minutes, I think—and I remembered, oddly enough, that this clock was fifteen minutes too slow, and that his majesty, only two days before, had threatened to amuse himself with setting it right. The old timepiece seemed going forward as steadily as though there were nothing more in progress than a hunt or a birthday *fête*.

The sun was already high, and checkered lights fell on the floor beside me as they had done in other days. I sat down in one of the grand *salons*, and watched them with my ears strained to catch every sound. I seemed stricken motionless,



with not even strength to push back the hair which was falling over my face.

Presently one of the queen's ladies came swiftly through the apartment.

"You dear child!" she said, pausing a moment beside me, "don't sit so calmly here. We must all save our lives as best we can if the king goes to the Assembly. Mandat has disappeared—murdered, they say—and we are given over to the people. So much for serving princes."

I had never loved this lady, and her words made me angry. I roused myself and sprung to my feet.

"When I gave my service to my queen," I said, "my life was a part of the offering. It is better to die well than live a traitor."

Madame laughed. "You will have a chance to try it," she answered bitterly; "make the best of your opportunity."

With that it came suddenly to my mind that if matters stood indeed as she said, I might never see my dear lady again this side of heaven; and at the thought I flew through the apartment in search of her. At the doorway Gabrielle suddenly confronted me. Her hair, unlike mine, had been neatly arranged, and her eyes were steady and free from fear.

"Ah, Marguerite," she cried, catching my hands, "do I look brave? and will the princess, do you think, take me with her?"

"Alas, Gabrielle! I know nothing," I answered; "come and we shall see."

We passed through crowds of agitated servants—trembling women and nerveless men. The king's expected desertion seemed to have undone his household, and overborne the stoutest-hearted of them all. The three hundred gallant gentlemen, I doubted not, were ready as ever to die, but what would their dying avail?

Their majesties were on the point of departure, but I saw at a glance that there was no hope for either Gabrielle or myself. The crowning honour of going with them to dishonour and



death was only for a few. Like one who is barred from entering paradise, I stood on one side watching; and my dear lady seeing this gave me a look of hopeless love and compassion which I shall never forget. I drew near to her, and stooping down caught up a fold of her gown and pressed it to my lips. I had no thought for myself—no consciousness, beyond the noting of that look of queenly resolution and suffering in her face. All other things seemed swept away: this seemed the end of all, as when one ends a story and closes the book.

I dropped into one of the great chairs when they had gone, and hid my face in my hands, sobbing like a child. The noise of the multitude came nearer and nearer; but even when I heard firing close at hand, and the rushing of many feet, I did not stir. What possible refuge remained for those forsaken by the king?

Then some one came up close beside me and gently drew my hands from my face, saying in decided tones, "Come!"

I looked up helplessly, and answered, "What use, Monsieur d'Arblay? let me die."

"You don't know what it is to die," he answered hoarsely, "at such hands as those."

His voice was to me like voices in a dream. When he raised me to my feet and put his arm about me, I seemed overcome as one in sleep who has no power to struggle or make remonstrance; so he carried me through the long chamber and into the corridor. There the fresher air upon my face aroused me, and I begged to be set free. The firing still continued; the roar of the cannon had become so deafening that I could hardly make my words audible. However, he did not entirely disregard my wishes, but letting me stand still for a moment, he threw about me a long cloak, such as the common women wear, and drew the end of it over my head so that my hair was concealed. I heard him saying as he did so, "Those Swiss fools are signing their own death-warrants."

This made me so angry that I would have stayed where I



was, save that being stronger than I, he drew me along. I noticed even then in my bewilderment that his chief concern seemed to be the keeping of that cloak well wrapped about me.

We left the palace by an entrance facing the Place Louis XV., and farthest away from the raging multitude and the sound of the cannon. Ah, sweet Sainte Marguerite, what a beautiful mild morning, and how brightly the sun shone ! The pikes and bayonets glittered so that I closed my eyes from the glare of them. As for M. d'Arblay, he seemed to have some secret talisman for passing all guards and barriers ; and when we were fairly in the midst of the multitude his face seemed so well known that no one ventured to oppose him. I realized then, more than ever before, what a wretched traitor he has become. The shots were dealing death on every side. I held my breath, thinking each moment I should be in heaven ; and never way seemed longer than ours through that scene of carnage. One wretched man with blood upon his hand offered a foul red cap to M. d'Arblay, saying, " Here, *citoyen*, put it on ;" and with a light laugh on his lips M. d'Arblay obeyed, as though it were some insignia of honour, and he were glad to claim brotherhood with that miserable crew. I shrunk from him then in a sort of madness, crying, " Let me die—I will not go with you ; let me die !"

For in the midst of all those groans and shrieks, and those terrible brutish faces, M. d'Arblay's light laugh seemed like a sound from the lowest hell. Better death and heaven than such deliverance as his !

But he could not hear my protestations if he had chosen to heed them ; and still he hastened me on the way, and it was not so much I who walked as he who carried me. Once he said to me, calling loud in my ear, " Keep up a brave heart, and try to look as though you did not mind it ; that is the only safety."

It is well to keep up a brave heart. In all ordinary trials,



with the help of God, this may be possible ; but if one is suddenly carried beyond all human imagining, how can one think of courage ?

For as I opened my eyes at M. d'Arblay's words, trying if possible to look the courage which I could not feel, I saw such a scene as might make the angels shudder. Dead and dying men were on every hand, and women furies were laughing and dancing and cutting at the dying Swiss with their knives. And one sight more horrible than all—O my God ! I will not write of it, I cannot think of it even now—froze the blood in my veins, and I shrieked as though I had gone mad,—shrieked and shrieked again. I could not have forborne that cry if I had known death lay behind it. I covered my eyes with my hands, and not knowing what I did, struggled again with all my strength to escape. M. d'Arblay was gentle with me—as well he might, seeing what I saw ; and I know that, under the good God, it was his self-possession and his careless words to those about us that kept me from certain death. He held me fast, as one would hold a maniac, however, and I heard him as one hears things in a dream making excuses to those about him, and little jests upon my weakness, as though he were one of themselves.

It seems to me that less than this might have sent me to the Bicêtre years ago ; but after all I am alive, and my reason has not gone from me.

The noises died slowly away, and then as the streets grew more quiet, I found myself entering a cab, and M. d'Arblay seating himself beside me. I think we were silent for a long while ; but when I found myself at rest, and that those dreadful sounds had ceased, all but the distant firing of cannon, I said what was first in my mind,—

“O Monsieur d'Arblay, what terrible friends you have !”

“They are no friends of mine,” he answered gloomily.

“Ah, my poor queen, my poor queen !” I said sobbing.

He uttered an exclamation between his teeth which I was



quite as happy not to understand, and then we rolled along in silence again.

I suppose we had not driven far, though it had seemed many miles to me, but we were on the other side of the river, when I looked out with a purpose to see where I was going. The streets were unfamiliar. At first I searched vainly for a landmark, and this although I must have driven many times within a stone's-throw of where we were passing. The quiet was wonderful, and the every-day placid look in the faces of those we passed almost frightened me. To me it had seemed as if the very heavens should bend, and the earth quake, after such scenes as we had looked upon. Here no one seemed aroused beyond his usual custom. Carriages trundled quietly through the streets, and men and women picked their way among them, or stood and chattered in doorways and other safe corners where they would not be overthrown by the horses. The first familiar thing that met my eye was the statue of Henri Quatre, on the Pont Neuf, and that I saw at a distance; then still further on, the towers of Notre Dame.

We crossed the Pont St. Michel, and by the Marché Neuf, and then through many little streets which were both strange and unsavoury. Also they seemed desolate, as though no one were at home. At last, in a somewhat better neighbourhood, we stopped before a small plain house, where M. d'Arblay helped me to alight.

A woman of middle age, with a sharp face and keen black eyes, met us at the door.

"Ah, Citoyen d'Arblay!" she said, "what has been going on? Is Brunswick coming? I have heard firing for an hour or more, and no one knows what it is about."

M. d'Arblay did not condescend to give her any answer. He signed to her that she was to lead the way into her sitting-room, and she obeyed his gestures as though she knew that there was nothing to be gained by pressing her questions. The room was cool and neat, with a faint odour of lavender,



which seemed to rest me ; and when I saw the door close after them, the sense of solitude and quiet was such a dear relief that I set to sobbing like a child. But as soon as I began to think, my thoughts were more than I could bear, and I paced the floor to shut out the terrible scenes which crowded close upon my brain.

In the midst of my walking M. d'Arblay returned, and as I paused suddenly he came up to me and took my hand.

"I think you will be safe here, dear lady," he said ; "but you must keep in hiding. Madame Bertrande will protect and care for you, as I have given her good charge to do."

"I will stay here until I am rested," I answered with much perverseness ; "but I refuse to be your prisoner, Monsieur d'Arblay."

"It will be death if you venture away from here," he answered quickly. "And seeing that fact as clearly as I do, even against your will I shall see that you do not endanger your life."

M. d'Arblay smiled to himself. I think he was not afraid ; neither was I, being quite sure that any ordinary woman like Madame Bertrande would not be beyond my resources.

She appeared as soon as M. d'Arblay had left, and began to repeat what he had already told me. She would protect any friend of Citoyen d'Arblay, since he was well known as a patriot and a friend of the people.

She spoke with a significant smile. Indeed she told me plainly that she had no doubt I must be very near to him, since he was so anxious for my safety. And when I tried to assure her that such was not the case, she smiled again, as though my denial were a thing of course.

She is a cautious woman. She does not tattle after the manner of the French, but keeps her own counsel. I cannot help thinking that she has learned these foreign traits through hard necessity. I am sure she has opinions of her own, but she keeps them hoarded. I don't know whether she approves



of all that is doing now, or whether it grieves her. Indeed it may well be that she does not understand the half of it. She said once that she was glad her poor husband was dead ; and those are the most significant words which I have heard her speak, for she seems to cherish the memory of poor M. Bertrande.

This evening, when we sat together in the twilight, I tried to draw her on to tell me all that she felt. For when two women are sitting idly together, one will often say things unawares through love of sympathy.

And for my part I had said much which had been better left unsaid. I not only told her about myself, but I spoke my mind freely in regard to those wretched Sansculottes, and declared that Paris was a city of murderers. Presently she answered quietly,—

“My good *citoyenne*, I pray you to forbear,” and with that she shivered slightly, and rose to see that the door was fast. She even put her head from the window to make sure that none were lingering beneath it.

“The very air is foul with blood,” I insisted, though I spoke in softer tones. “Ah, madame ! if you could have seen the sight which met my eyes last Friday.”

“Citoyen d’Arblay is a good friend of yours, *citoyenne*,” she said, trying vainly to turn me from the subject.

“I do not care to speak of M. d’Arblay,” I answered with some coldness. “If you have any news of her majesty, for that I will thank you ; that is all I care to know.”

“I trouble myself little with those affairs,” she said ; “it is better to keep at home and mind the house, and not know anything beyond. I never buy a journal, and were it not for Brunswick and his army close at hand, I would not even look at one. However, the meat which I purchased this afternoon had a piece of Saturday’s journal wrapped about it ; you shall read, if you choose, *citoyenne*.”

She went cautiously from the room, closing the door behind her. Everything is closed, as though the house were in a state



of siege, or even as though it were a prison. All through the morning, and the night before, I had been trying secretly to find some unguarded window or some traitorous lock, by which I could make my escape, but all to little purpose.

She returned quickly, though not before I had set my heart upon a new expedient. I took from my finger the pearl ring which M. de Nesle had given me as a token of betrothal. There was nothing else about me which I thought would so surely tempt a woman's fancy; and as Madame Bertrande came toward me with the journal, I laid it in her hand. Surely, I thought, my lover would forgive my disloyalty, if he could only know the cause.

"*Citoyenne*," I said, "I am stifling here; I pray you let me out, if only for an hour, that I may breathe the fresh air of heaven."

She looked at the ring, and I could see that her eyes were sparkling with delight. In a moment, however, she sighed heavily, and laid it back in my hand.

"I dare not," she answered. "If I did as you wish, *citoyenne*, it would be your death. Even if I dared to offend Citoyen d'Arblay, I would not give you over to certain destruction. The aristocrats are falling on every side, they tell me, and there are no passports given. The new government must protect itself by seizing traitors."

"I am no traitor," I answered quickly, "as any one might see. No government could be so foolish as to interfere with a helpless woman."

Madame shrugged her shoulders.

"Citoyen d'Arblay told me yesterday that there is no safety for you but in wedding him," she answered coldly; "and it seems to me, *citoyenne*, that when one has no choice, it is wisest to submit to the lot which the good God appoints us."

"The good God does not cast our lots in such a fashion," I answered pleasantly, having too great anger against M. d'Arblay himself to let it stop short at Madame Bertrande, who was only fulfilling his wishes.



"Citoyen d'Arblay is well known," she continued in a cold, impassive tone, "and his name will save you."

"M. d'Arblay knows quite well that I will never marry him," I answered quickly.

"Many a woman would be proud to marry a man who had saved her life," said my hostess, sighing gently. "When life promises so well, one is foolish to choose death."

"M. d'Arblay is not the only man who has saved my life, good *citoyenne*," I answered. But even at the thought, though no eyes but madame's were upon me, the colour mounted to my face, and my eyes filled with tears.

"You are an aristocrat," she answered irrelevantly; "but so is he."

"In turning Sansculotte one ceases to be noble," I replied; but I think the scorn in my voice was lost upon madame.

"Well, yes; every one has ceased to be noble now, whether he will or no," she answered. "As to turning Sansculotte, a man will sometimes be led further than he wills to save his life, *citoyenne*."

And I replied with much decision, "No true nobleman would choose his life before his honour, and choose well."

She laughed, a low, unpleasant laugh, and left me to the journal and my thoughts.

I sat and held the printed sheet for some moments in my hand, not daring to learn the worst; but when my heart became more quiet, and my courage stronger, I began slowly to make out the headings. Then I discovered much—so much that I might well have been afraid. I learned that my dear king, who had yielded the extremest point sooner than do a wrong to his conscience, was a greater monster, and more eager for blood, than Charles of the St. Bartholomew! I learned also that "thousands of torches were found in the cellars of the palace, placed there in readiness that the city might be burned, on a moment's notice, at a signal from this 'modern Nero.'"

Surely no journal could have brought me stranger tidings.



I wondered in my heart if it was *so* the people of Paris were fed day after day, and filled with hatred of their king. For it is people of small wit and shallow brain who are easily led away by falsehoods. It is the rabble of St. Antoine, of course, who are pleased with the pitiful pleasantry which calls their king a "crowned ogre," and their queen an "Austrian panther." Fairy tales for children these indeed!

In the midst of my anger came a sudden knock at the outer door—not a resounding knock, but one which told of caution and reserve. I sprung suddenly to the window, and putting my face close to it, looked below. The light was faint and dim, but I could see clearly enough that it was M. d'Arblay himself, standing and waiting admittance. The door seemed to be opened at once; but before entering he spoke a few hurried words, which I tried vainly to understand. In a moment more, Madame Bertrande appeared at my door, to tell me that Citoyen d'Arblay would like to see me below.

If protestations would have availed, I should have humbled myself to use them. Knowing that they would not, it seemed more dignified to follow madame. But forgetting that the nation now is king, I have no doubt I bore myself too haughtily for one of a party which has been so sadly set at naught. I did not notice M. d'Arblay's offered hand, but folded my own one over the other, and strove to be as calm as possible.

"I think you sent for me, *citoyen*," I said. And he answered,—

"Forget your old bitterness, Marguerite. Life is a very serious matter now, and your safety weighs heavily upon my heart."

"There is no need," I returned coldly, "since it does not weigh on mine. And life is always a serious matter to earnest souls, Monsieur d'Arblay. But since you seem overborne with trouble on my account, pray rid yourself at once of such a grave responsibility, and set me free."

M. d'Arblay walked several times the length of the room,



seeming troubled in his mind, and when he spoke again his voice was less steady than before.

"You don't know what you are saying, Marguerite," he said. "Let you go indeed! You have no idea of what is doing in Paris."

"I can believe the worst," I answered; "I hope I have already *seen* the worst that any city can show, Monsieur d'Arblay. And as to the rest, I know that I am in prison now, and though I should meet a band of murderers at every corner, I want to be free."

"Would you rather be in La Force than here, dear lady?" he answered me. And then, as I had seated myself, being weak from my very effort at resistance, he fell on one knee before me and bent to kiss my hand. "O Marguerite!" he pleaded, "here you are only the prisoner of love; there you would truly be in the jaws of death."

All my words seemed to weigh so little. It seemed useless to make further protest, useless even to withdraw my hand, and I answered with the patience of one in despair: "You know I had far rather be in prison with my queen than in any keeping of yours, Monsieur d'Arblay."

"The queen has no need of service now," he answered coldly.

"But she has always need of *friends*," I persisted. "For all your kindness in saving my life I thank you, monsieur; but I do not wish your hospitality, I can protect myself."

And then he laughed bitterly. "You would be a brave protectress for yourself," he answered between his set teeth, seizing both of my hands, and holding them fast while he spoke. "I tell you that there is no safety for your life except through me. What other friend have you on the side of the nation? As my *wife*, no one would think of harming you. Think of it well, for marriage is better than imprisonment and death."

His passion, his indignant anger, affrighted me. I stood alone against him, and he had reason on his side, while I had only right on mine. But if right was on my side, so was also



the good God, and I remembered how the pastor Leroy had said that the Lord is strong for those who trust in him. I sent a cry to him from my soul that hour ; for I felt sure that if he did not always deliver from death, he would always deliver from sin. And marriage with such a man as this, whose very tenderness my soul abhorred, and whose anger filled me with fear, would surely be for me a grievous sin. So when I cried with an inward sob, "Good Lord, deliver me!" I had no thought of prison or of death, and after that my heart grew strong again.

But M. d'Arblay had seen my weakness, and I doubt not read it for defeat, for he added in a moment, very gently : "Against all odds, and in face of all your coldness, I have loved you above everything, Marguerite. You are the one good thing which life holds for me—which I have sworn to obtain."

"By fair means or foul, monsieur?" I asked with the shadow of a smile.

"The means shall be fair enough," he answered promptly. "The safety of your life would justify the use of any means." And then, seeing that I still remained quite calm, he told me plainly that he purposed to return to-morrow morning with a priest to make me his wife, seeing that longer delay would be perilous to my safety. I did not answer him. What need to answer? I have laid my cause before the Lord. I shall wait for his deliverance.



## XXVIII.

### *"REAPING THE WHIRLWIND."*

THE sun had just risen on that Saturday morning after Manon had sheltered her questionable guest, when Jacques returned. He had a few moments of rest in prospect after many hours of labour and excitement, and he stood in great need of them. His entering awakened Manon, who was sleeping with Félice in her arms the restless sleep which waits upon an anxious heart. The Swiss soldier, having a brave soul and a quiet conscience, slept more peacefully than she.

The first sound of her husband's step on the stair brought the thought of this stranger to Manon's mind. If her old faith in Jacques had been unshaken, she would not have doubted in her heart that he would be ready to shelter a fallen foe. But the events of the last few months had not tended to nourish her faith. She was troubled with many misgivings. She feared that Jacques might even be capable of turning this poor fellow out to the fury of his enemies, for in those days it was hard to set the limits of a true patriot's duty. And as Jacques threw himself on the bed without a word of greeting, Manon blessed God under her breath that *her* conscience, at least, did not belong to the nation. After she had risen and dressed herself, she stood watching him for a moment before she went down the stairs. Already from great exhaustion he had dropped into a heavy sleep, but his hands moved nervously and his face was haggard and wan. Manon was touched with compassion; she would even have left a kiss on his forehead, if she had not



feared to arouse him. How much he must love the country to be willing so to sacrifice himself !

Softly she went about her work, revolving in her mind that troublesome problem how to guard the entrance to her father's room. She looked in once and drew the shutters closer. Her patient slept as quietly as a child, with his hands crossed on his breast. "The great God keeps him," said Manon gently ; "he knows no fear."

She lighted her fire and laid the table ; then before cooking the breakfast for Jacques she sat down for a little while with her Bible, and some of the peace of Heaven entered her heart with the words which she read : "There shall no evil befall thee, because thou hast made the Lord thy habitation." That must mean that to her, *Manon*, if she dwelt in God, close to him, nothing could be evil. In such a "habitation" no real harm could reach her.

The kettle was boiling now, and as Félice had not appeared she crept up softly to see if the child were yet awake. Jacques's nap had been a short one ; the fever in his mind would not let him rest.

"Haste thee, Manon," he said with some impatience. "I must have breakfast in ten minutes or not at all. These dastardly committees leave a man no time to breathe. Thou art pale as a shadow this morning, and all for no cause, I'll warrant."

Manon made no answer ; she was too entirely true to take refuge in an evasion, even to protect another.

"It is your own fault if you fret and pine here by yourself," Jacques went on. "You should go to the Club and the Assembly, like a good patriot, and learn how to help your country."

"I am best at home, Jacques, caring for thy needs," said Manon gently. She stooped as she spoke and settled the covering about the little Félice, for there were tears in her eyes, and she did not dare to raise her hand to them. She dried them deftly in the neck of the child as she kissed her.

Jacques laughed.



“Thou art like a child with her doll,” he said shortly ; and then as Manon turned to go he added as an after-thought, “We have rare news to give zest to one’s appetite : the king and queen are at last prisoners of the nation.”

“The king a prisoner !” cried Manon in amazement.

“And why not ?” said Jacques with a laugh ; “he has made many others prisoners—his turn has come.”

Manon went softly out and closed the door behind her. All was very quiet below. Her patient was sleeping still, with his arms thrown above his head, but his breathing was heavy. She fancied that one could hear it even in passing by the door. But then her senses were quickened by her great anxiety. She had already made the room as dark as possible ; it occurred to her now that she might even turn the key and withdraw it. But such deliberate plotting was against her nature, and showed too manifest distrust of Jacques.

There was a prayer in her heart as she stole about making the breakfast ready—a prayer she scarcely knew for what, a lifting up of the heart to God for deliverance from evil where evil seemed about her like the sea.

The morning was very fair. A distant song of birds reached her from the Place de Grève, and the dew lay heavily on the little strip of grass behind the house. She took note of all. God had not forgotten the greenness of the earth, and the birds were thankful.

Just as the breakfast was ready Félice came tripping down, and was settled at the kitchen table with a bowl of bread and milk. Manon was glad to put her by herself ; children’s tongues, however discreet, will slip at times.

Then came a heavier step on the stairs and through the hall, which seemed to Manon to linger at the door of the darkened room, and when Jacques appeared she had to busy herself with the table to hide her troubled face.

Jacques ate lightly for so hardily-worked a man ; and as for Manon, she could not swallow her coffee. It seemed, however,



as though the meal would never end. At last, as he rose from table, Jacques said in a careless tone, "Your father left some papers in his room which I must take with me. I suppose you have not touched them, Manon?"

"Oh, let me get them, dear Jacques! I will fetch them in a moment," said Manon, rising quickly, and quite off her guard with fright.

Jacques gazed at her in wonder, then pushed her back into her seat. "Thank you," he answered dryly; "you have done quite enough this morning. I prefer to wait upon myself."

Manon sat white and trembling for a moment, counting her husband's footsteps along the narrow hall. Then, unable to control herself, she suddenly sprang up and ran after him.

As she reached the room he was turning the full blaze of the morning light upon the bed where her sick soldier lay; and standing dumb, stricken with fear, in the doorway, she saw him draw a pistol from his pocket and take deliberate aim at his victim. There was no groan or struggle; only one sharp report, and her patient was beyond her care for ever. Jacques turned him over to make quite sure that he was dead, and then came directly toward her, seizing her shoulder with his blood-spotted hand.

"Your heart is too tender for a patriot's wife," he said between his teeth. "You will have the kindness to bear in mind that your husband is Jacques Foucher the revolutionist, and beware how you shelter traitors."

Manon made no sound; her eyes were wide and terror-stricken, her face deadly pale. She had strength to shake off his hold upon her shoulder with feverish impatience. Then springing to the door which led to the street, she flung it open and shrieked "Murder! murder!" with all her little power which was left.

The startling cry rang out clearly in the still morning air; but what meaning could it have in the city of Paris on the morning of the 11th of August 1792? And even so, before she could repeat it Jacques's hand was over her mouth, and



his smile had satisfied the curious eyes of the few who gazed upon them. This was a good patriot; he knew his own affairs; without doubt the woman was crazy. Who indeed in their right minds would call for vengeance on a murderer in such a nest of murderers as this?

"Now," said Jacques, seating her with some violence in the nearest chair, "I wish you to understand that this is simply an act of national justice. I was forced with my own hands to execute it. The nation is in a desperate case, and demands the lives of traitors. In such times one is only a *citizen*; one ceases to be husband, brother, father. It may be needful even to sacrifice one's nearest kin on the altar of one's country. Therefore I warn you not to stand in my way."

"You mean," she said slowly, in a forced, inanimate sort of way, "that you may grow to hate me so much that you will demand my life also?"

"Interpret my words as you choose," he answered shortly. And without waiting for further parley, he took up his hat and the bundle of papers and was gone.

The little Félice had already run in, drawn by the shot and the voice of Manon, and stood gently crying in a corner. But when they were alone, she came near and nestled her little frightened face close in Manon's arm.

"Does the good God love us still, maman Manon?" she sobbed.

"God always loves us," Manon answered in strange, quiet tones. Her eyes were dry and her heart oppressed with a weight of misery.

"What is the matter with the poor soldier?" whispered Félice again.

"He has gone home to God," Manon replied, whispering also, as she drew Félice closer in her arms. And it did occur to her that moment that since all things earthly had so utterly failed her—love, and hope, and safe protecting—it would be a blessed thing if she also and this little child holding each other



so closely could enter then and there into the rest which that poor fellow had found. Manon even found it in her heart to wonder if it was *so* that her unuttered prayer had been answered on his account.

It seemed as if the end must have come—as if nothing could ever go on in the daily life as it had gone before. But presently, as the morning wore away, Manon fell on her knees, drawing Félice with her, and there in broken words, two or three at a time, she told her sorrow, and tried to lay down her burden. Also in that hour she laid away her dead love in quiet burial folds, and left it in God's keeping. It was not her fault that it had died so soon—that she knew beyond a peradventure that the breath of life should never enter it again.

After a while it seemed as though an answer came to her: "When thou walkest through the waters, I will be with thee"—"When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned."

Fire and deep water were a part of God's teaching. He had given no promise of exemption from them; but his "I will be with thee" should be enough for any loyal heart. Manon prayed that he would make it quite enough for her.

She took no note how the minutes passed, or the hours. Late in the afternoon Félice became hungry and begged for food, which brought to Manon's mind that the child had not eaten since morning. Her father did not return, nor Jacques; but just as the night was falling, two men came in unannounced whom she had never seen before. They asked bluntly where they could find the body of the Swiss, and Manon showed them. Then she went to Félice, and stood with her back against the closed door, listening while they bore him away. With her own hands she removed the stains of blood, calling it in her own heart the blood of a martyr. And perhaps she was not far astray.

Two or three days slipped by, Manon going about as one in a dream. She could hardly have told what she did, or why one



day was different from another. One morning, when Jacques was not at home, and she had come down with the first gray dawn to prepare breakfast for her father, she heard a faint tap at the door, three times repeated. She stood still, wondering and listening. This seemed like a call from the outer world, a world in which she had almost ceased to live. The gentle tap seemed to lead her back into other days, when Jacques had come tapping in such a fashion that *her* ears only might hear it. Perhaps she had been dreaming, and no cloud had fallen between those days and her.

But while she waited the sound was repeated, and Manon with a weary sigh took to her heart the truth that she had fallen upon sadder times, and hastened to undo the door. A figure wrapped in a long cloak stood before her. The pale face just visible in the dim light was beautiful even in its misery. Manon at the sight of it roused herself from her dreaming, and like a ray of comfort the thought of Henri came to her.

"My dear little Manon," said the sweet voice that she remembered well, "I am in danger and without a friend; can you shelter me until I can think and plan?"

Shelter in such a home as this! Manon's eyes grew wide with terror and dismay. Yet well she understood the danger of which the lady spoke, and after the scenes of the past week her heart leaped more than ever to its old allegiance. Without the hesitation of a moment she drew Marguerite quickly within the house, and fell to kissing her hands; and at that, for the first time since these days of misery, her tears began to flow. Seeing this, Marguerite wrapped the little woman in her arms, and kissed her tenderly. "You dear little Manon," she said, "is sorrow everywhere—even among the people who have conquered? Do not put yourself in danger for my sake."

But Manon was thinking of the unused garret above, filled with ancient chests and broken furniture, where no feet ever entered but her own. It was comfortless enough, and the rats were meagre company; but there the wanderer could be hidden



for a while from even domiciliary visitors. Such intruders would not be likely to show much care in searching the house of a good patriot like Jacques. So she said in haste, and speaking with a quiet vehemence, "I will hide you, even if it costs me my life: what is my life to me? If I would not do it for the love I bear to you, I would for Henri's sake."

"For Henri's sake!" repeated the other gently, but with some surprise; though the wonder was not that Henri loved her—that she knew full well—but that Manon should be aware of it.

But Manon was already hurrying her through the passage, lest even Félice should awaken and surprise them. The stairs which led to the attic creaked sadly as they mounted; no one but Manon ever ascended to that desolate region now, and she only upon rare occasions. The cobwebs hung heavily from the rafters, and the air was close and musty from long keeping. There were two windows—very small ones—through which the light crept dimly athwart festoons which had been wrought by many generations of spiders, and dust which had long gathered with none to hinder. Manon opened one of these, which faced to the rear of the house, and from which one could catch glimpses of the river, and so let in a breath of the fresh morning air. After this she drew from some dim corner a broken arm-chair, which was comfortable in spite of its infirmities; and having carefully dusted it, she placed it as near as possible to the open window. Her companion meanwhile stood and watched her with a happy smile upon her lips. For Marguerite's sorrows, unlike those of Manon, had not gone so deeply but that a sense of liberty and safety could bring back comfort to her heart.

"That was my grandmother's chair," said Manon, with a little sigh; "it was broken years ago, and being so quaint my mother laid it aside. Dear lady, this poor attic is the only shelter I can offer you; anywhere else under this roof you would be in danger."



She did not add an explanation. She felt instinctively that Marguerite would have too much generous feeling to remain if she should tell her all.

"This is like a palace," said Marguerite gently, "because here I am free."

"And then, dear lady, presently, when father is gone, I will bring you some food," Manon went on; "and by-and-by I will make a bed for you."

"Ah, your father!" exclaimed Marguerite, seating herself with a little laugh which was pitiful from its melancholy undertone. "Dear Manon, I had quite forgotten your father. He will be very angry, and I should not try to save my life by bringing misery upon you. I will sit here a little while and fancy I am free, and then I will go forth and let them put me in La Force, and the nation may take care of me."

But at this Manon sunk on the floor, and began passionately to kiss the little white hands which clasped each other on Marguerite's knees. "Dearest lady," she sobbed, "do not break my heart. My father is changed; he would never harm you. And Henri—oh! Henri would die if evil should come to you. Dear lady, I have many sorrows—my heart is heavy with them; do not add another to my burdens by going now."

"Comfort thee, Manon," said Marguerite, kissing her: "so long as thou art not in danger I will stay; and may God bless thee!"

And to Manon it seemed as though a gleam of light had shone through the thick darkness about her. Now she had some one at least for whom to lay her plans, and so keep her thoughts from wearing the same old channels day after day.

While she served her father at breakfast, she caught his eye several times resting upon her with a glance which seemed almost wistful in its scrutiny, as though he were in some terrible strait and were pleading with her for help and sympathy. Sometimes two souls come close to each other without knowing it, without the mutual help which would be worth so much.



Yet, though Manon, wrapped in her own affairs, missed seeing what urgent need her father had of help and strength from her, still she was struck by the pallor of his face as he rose to go, and she begged that he would rest a little longer. Must one needs work all the time and for ever on those atrocious committees?

This was a strong word for that quiet little woman to use. She used it with a certain defiant courage, too, which had grown upon her in the past few days. If the Committee of Public Safety had itself been present, she would have spoken quite as freely.

"When the country is in danger," the old man answered absently, "one has no private affairs; one must do one's duty."

He turned abruptly then, without even a farewell, and Manon watched him down the street with wistful eyes in which the tears lay hidden. His step had grown heavier during the past few weeks. He walked like a man who has lost all hope and energy, and whose sole aim is to drag away his life. The hunted look in his eyes was a mystery to Manon; she held no clue to it. Her father might be changed indeed in other ways, as she had told the Lady Marguerite; he surely was gentler than he used to be, but he was also much more miserable. His honours had brought no peace to his mind; of this she was well assured.

With a long-drawn sigh Manon moved away from the window, and having settled Félice and the cat to mutual companionship in the little sitting-room, she crept softly upstairs with food for Marguerite. But she did not dare to tarry above even for a moment, lest Jacques should return, and, finding her missing, fall to searching for her. It was well for Marguerite's safety that patriots saw but little of their homes in those memorable August and September days—that even the small share of sleep they could secure was almost entirely taken at their posts. Night and day the nation had need of them, and there was no gainsaying the demands of such a vigilant task-mistress.



And so it was only after Jacques had returned for a silent supper, and had again departed, that Manon dared trust herself to hold a little converse with her guest. Jacques had been more gentle with her that evening, wishing perhaps to atone for his past acts of violence; but Manon held her peace, and did not even give him greeting. She placed his supper silently before him, and then moved away to the window, standing and looking out at the fading daylight. He asked her then with a laugh, which was meant to be a pleasant one, if she were past the need of food for herself. And she answered, without turning her head, that she had already eaten with Félice. Jacques muttered some incoherent words about her preferring the child's society to his, and she made no answer. He then assured her that he was willing to overlook her folly, and that she might as well be friends with him.

"I am not at enmity with any one, Jacques," she answered, in a sad, impassive tone. But when he approached her and, putting his arm roughly about her, stooped to kiss her lips, she shrunk away.

Yet the action was involuntary. If she had had more control over her will, she might for many reasons, and for the sake of more than one dear interest, have yielded to his caress. She drew back with a sure instinct, as she would have done from the touch of some loathsome thing. And Jacques Foucher could not know that even more than she shrunk from his outward touch her soul shrunk from his; that to her eyes his hands were still polluted with blood, although he had washed them over and over; that deeply as she had loved him in other days, so deeply she abhorred him now. He could not know; and if an angel had told him, he would not have understood.

"One never has any end of trouble with a woman," he said with a short laugh. "If you insult them in ever so small a degree, you have all your courting to begin again."

"You need not trouble yourself for that, Jacques," she answered gently.



"So! well, that is a relief to one's mind," he answered, going back to his supper. "As for the rest, we had better be friends, Manon."

And to this again she made no answer, but waited upon him with the patient forbearance of a woman whose hopes are dead.

As Jacques looked no further at that moment than to the satisfaction of his physical needs, and as he regarded woman as an enigmatical creation at the best, he was fairly well content.

Was it any wonder that to Manon, as she at last mounted the garret-stair and thought of her own sad lot, it seemed a blessed thing for any woman to have such a lover as Henri, even though the woman herself were a queen?

She set down her candle on an old iron-bound chest, while she carefully covered the windows lest a gleam of unwonted light should shine through them. The supper which she had brought was plain and frugal; but as Marguerite was young, and had been fasting since breakfast-time, the simplest fare seemed a feast.

Marguerite looked up with a smile in her eyes. "You are very good to me," she said.

"And why should I not be good, dear lady?" said Manon, without disclaiming the charge. "How could I be anything else?"

"What did you mean," said Marguerite gently, "when you said that you would take care of me for your brother's sake?" She was sorry the moment that she had asked the question.

"Because," said Manon, with some hesitation, "he asked me if you were in trouble to give you shelter."

"Did he leave me in *every one's* charge, I wonder?" said Marguerite with a little laugh which trembled on the verge of tears, and had more tenderness than merriment behind it. And then as Manon looked at her with a puzzled face, she added reverently,—

"You will be glad, dear Manon, to know that I also have found the comfort of your faith. I have been in a great strait,



and I have learned to give my love and trust to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Manon began to sob for joy, kneeling on the floor amongst the dusty chests and broken furniture, and pouring out her heart in broken words of thanks. And when she was quiet again, Marguerite told her of all that had passed since the tenth of August, and how she had been held a "prisoner" of M. d'Arblay.

"And, Manon, truly I think the Lord delivered me," she added.

Manon listened with eager eyes.

"That night was very hot," said Marguerite softly, "and Madame Bertrande was a little off her guard. For M. d'Arblay having settled everything for a marriage in the morning, I think she had a fancy that I had yielded my point. Instead of placing her bed across the door, Manon dear, she drew it toward the window, where the air was fresher, and laid her keys carelessly away on the table. In the first gray of morning, when she was sleeping soundly, I dressed and wrapped the cloak about me which M. d'Arblay had so kindly provided, and slipped from the chamber without arousing her. The angels must have held her back from hearing me."

Manon smiled. She had but little faith in the intervention of angels; it was enough for her that the great God knew and cared. She ranked such fancies as Marguerite's amongst the errors of Popery. Yet it never had occurred to her that David went beyond his limit when he too spoke of God's angel as encamping about his servants.

"And then," Marguerite went on, "the streets were quiet, and I sped along quickly; no one noticed or spoke to me. I am sure I need not have worried—God is good!"

"Yes, God is good," Manon repeated after her, and she began to weep with great pitiful sobs. "I need not worry, I am sure I need not worry," she repeated again, "for God is good. He will also lead me safely out; and I may look back and say how easy it was—how very, very easy."



But still she wept and moaned as though her strength had given way, and she had no longer the courage to live her daily life. And Marguerite, kneeling down beside her, with eyes full of pity for a sorrow which she did not understand, drew Manon's head on her bosom and comforted her with gentle touches and loving words.

It was very late that night when old André Beaupré returned to his home for a few hours of rest. Manon was sleeping so soundly that she did not hear the opening of the door; but Marguerite, lying on her strange little bed, with wide sleepless eyes, was alert for every sound. She had been watching the light flicker in the summit of a tower which loomed before the little attic window, and there had been no motion as yet but that of the mice that chased each other over the uncovered floor, and no noise but the ringing of some distant bell. And this step resounding at the outer door sent a thrill of apprehension through her. She trembled as she lay in the darkness and heard it enter the house.

And it was certainly strange, when old Beaupré had not been up to that attic for years, that he should suddenly on this night have called to mind an old sword which had been carried by his ancestor who perished in the St. Bartholomew. And yet it was not so strange when one considers that he knew there was to be a search for arms, and that domiciliary visits would be called for. The thought of this sword, which had occurred to him now and then, presented itself with special urgency to-night. He knew just where it hung—could lay his hand upon it in the darkness. With a little burnishing it might be a good thing for even a municipal to carry; whereas, in case of search, it would look ill that a concealed weapon should be found under a patriot's roof, were it only a rusty sword of ancient date and doubtful service. This was why Marguerite suddenly heard his heavy step come slowly up the stairs.

He carried a candle in his hand, but it was almost burned



away, and gave but a feeble light, while the stairs were narrow and old, creaking dismally with every footfall. The sound of his own step, of his own restless heart, startled the old man and caused him to walk unsteadily. He stumbled when near the top of the stairs, and in his efforts to regain his footing his candle went suddenly out.

"But I know where to find it," he said to himself, "for it was I that hung it up, and no one has touched it since."

Feeling his way cautiously among the chests and broken rubbish, he groped toward the spot where the moonlight, shining through the little window, cast squares of dusky whiteness on the floor. "I could have sworn that those shutters were closed," he muttered audibly then.

Marguerite had been lying quite still since she first heard his footsteps ascending the stairs; her hands, which had lain in the moonlight, she drew back into the shadow—that was all. But when she saw the gleam of light suddenly extinguished, she sprung from her bed and drew herself closely into the dark shadows of a distant corner, crouching, herself a shadow among them.

The old man took no notice of the bed, though the moonlight fell full upon it; or perhaps he viewed it in the light of some foolish fancy of Manon's. He went straight to the far corner, where he had hung the sword, and began groping blindly about the wall. It was so quiet that her own breathing seemed to Marguerite louder than the distant church-bells, which might be ringing out her doom. Cold beads of perspiration stood on her forehead as she tried to evade old Beaupré's outstretched hand; but when at last he touched her on the face, she gave a short hysterical laugh, relieved that all was over.

The old man started back with a cry of dismay.

"Do not be alarmed," said Marguerite gently, her own alarm somewhat abated as she realized that she was not the object of his search. "I am not able to do harm to any one;" and as she spoke she came slowly out into the full moonlight, and



stood before him in her delicate court robes, with hands clasped and a look of mute entreaty in her eyes.

They seemed to shine like stars upon that astonished old man, and the light which touched the gold of her hair his fancy shaped into a saintly aureole.

"And who are you in hiding here, yet who will harm no one?" he asked in great dismay. "Harmless folk do not grope in garrets, and innocent folk have no cause to hide."

"Yes—in *France*—and *now*," she answered gently. "I am an aristocrat, you see, monsieur, whom your daughter Manon has put in hiding. I pray you will not betray me to my enemies."

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" he answered in a voice which was like a cry, "am I fallen so low as to betray a woman or an angel?"

But when she tried to thank him, he turned with a groan and went stumbling down the stairs. His ancestor's sword was quite forgotten now; it might abide the coming of the officers of the law.

But next morning, as Manon served his breakfast, he suddenly set down his cup and said with some abruptness,—

"Daughter, I discovered last night that you have an aristocrat in hiding."

Manon's eyes dilated, and her face grew white with terror.

"Do not fret thyself," he continued shortly. "I have enough of that work to do without setting a hand to her. Only if they search the house, and she is found, it will be the end of me."

"O father!" cried Manon, "they will never search the house of such patriots as you and Jacques."

But her father only shrugged his shoulders, and draining his cup of coffee rose to go.

"If there is danger to you, father, I must find some other way to help her," continued Manon.

"Nay, nay; there is no other place," he answered gloomily. "And what is my life worth to me that I should try to keep



it? If I can save only one, who is young and good, it may help to atone—help to atone." He muttered these last words more to himself than to her, but Manon heard them. She put her arms about his neck, and laid her head on his shoulder.

"Dear father," she said, "Christ's blood has atoned; there is nothing else that can."

But he shook his head mournfully in answer to her words.

"For *pénitents*," he said; "not for those who sin on wilfully against a 'law written in their hearts,' my daughter."

"But *you* will not do that," she whispered in a pleading voice. "Let God take vengeance, in his own good time, without help from you."

He stroked her hair and wiped away her tears. Then putting her gently from him, he took up his hat and left the house without another word.



XXIX.

MARGUERITE'S REFUGE.

MANON WRITES.

*September 1792.*

SOMETIMES it seems as though I have died and been buried, and am moving in ghostly fashion upon this wicked earth. Of this I feel well assured: however long I may have to live, I can never pass through a time of greater horror than in these days, which are now just over—if, indeed, they are over at all. With me it is as when one stands over an active volcano, and one eruption is just passed, and the next may come to-morrow, or next week, or next month; while all the time there is no sense of safety, for the seething mass of hot fluid is always bubbling and boiling underneath, and treacherously crawling out over the face of the earth.

But so far as my life which has to do with this miserable under world is concerned, the breath of it died out when I found I had been loving a man who was not worthy of any woman's love. This thought had come to me before, but I had turned so resolutely from it that I still maintained my faith in Jacques's tenderness of heart, because he was sometimes tender to *me*.

I cannot write about the day when my thought became a hard reality, and my dreams withdrew into the land of visions. That day I said to myself, "You have no longer any husband;" and that part of my life was ended.

But, thank God! my earthly life was never all. Now I



find that the heavenly life comes down to us, so that we forget our losses. It is even possible to live on in a sort of enclosed place, where the sin and turmoil cannot enter. This must be the meaning of dwelling "in the secret place," and of "being kept secretly" in God's pavilion, so safe that even *Sep-tembriseurs* cannot find the entrance or the key.

At the time when I seemed in the hottest fire, God sent the Lady Marguerite to me, and for many days she has been sheltered under the roof of the revolutionist Jacques Foucher. Perhaps she is right in thinking that God's angels guard her, though it seems but a Popish notion; as if the good God had need of angels to "keep the feet of his saints."

After that day of which I spoke Jacques tried to be friends with me again, not understanding; and it seemed easier, for the sake of Félice and my father, to let things drag on as they were. Some thoughts are too sad to be told, and there are many which we dare not put into words. I knew that this sort of truce between us could not last, being, after all, rather a silence than a truce. Above all, if he should learn of my harbouring the Lady Marguerite, the result would not be far to seek.

From the first day of her coming she was too reckless to take account of danger for herself; and as I had never told her about my husband, she had no fear for me. She would watch from her little attic window the comers and the goers; and when she was quite sure that Félice and I were alone, she would come softly down the creaking stairs, like a ray of sunshine. No great sorrow weighed upon her heart in those first days of her coming, and she had not guessed at mine. And as the time passed without alarm, she grew more daring still. I was much alarmed one morning by a question put to me by little Madame Fabre, who stepped in for a moment with her baby. She thought perhaps we had taken lodgers, she said with a little laugh, as she was sure she had seen a strange face at the windows; but then, as M. Fabre said, she was always full of fancies. I assured her, as lightly



as I could without being untruthful, that though the times were hard, my father had not been so fortunate as to increase our means in such a fashion. Whereat she eyed me keenly with her small black eyes, and laughingly changed the subject. I could not but be glad of this, even though it were only to converse of that terrible machine which has been raised on the Place Louis XV., and which all the world goes forth to see. For myself, I would not walk in that direction for a kingdom. When I venture even so far as the Pont Neuf, I fancy that shrieks and groans are borne upon the wind to my ears. Of course this is fancy, for no one groans or cries, I believe, and the sharp knife makes a speedy end.

Madame Fabre had been over there with her husband the day before, which was Sunday. She said there was a fascination about it—the desire to see had driven her wild. It was like standing on the edge of a precipice and longing to throw oneself down. But after she had seen, she could not sleep all night for the horror of the blood which lay on the ground, and with which everything was foul.

I shuddered and grew white, being but a faint-hearted patriot by that time, and having always dreamed of a liberty which was so real that it could bear to be merciful.

"Ah, *bah!*" said madame, shrugging her shoulders; "we are only women, you and I, and we look with women's eyes. I lie awake all night, and you grow white like a spirit, at the thought of it. We are not wise. No one who is a good patriot and true to the country will lose his head. No one will miss traitors when Brunswick is upon us."

But all the same, having God's fear before my eyes, I begged Madame Fabre not to tell me any more.

"My good little woman," she said smiling, "I will say to you, as M. Fabre says to me, you have too kind a heart toward aristocrat plotters. You have no idea how evil-hearted these nobles are. M. Danton says it is only impure blood which is flowing, and impure blood can be spared."



Then, as I said nothing, she added with a laugh as she went out at the door, "I shall have no peace until I find out whose face that was at your window."

And so I begged of the Lady Marguerite, for *my* sake, to be cautious, since I knew she would not think it needful on any other grounds; and she heeded me so well that Madame Fabre's curiosity could never be contented.

At first I dared not speak of Henri, thinking surely that speaking could be of no avail, since even poverty would not cause her to forget her noble name. But one day she suddenly spoke of him herself, asking if I had news of him, and how he fared. And strangely enough, on that very day I had received a letter from Ste. Ménéhould, near the frontier, and the thought of it, even while she spoke to me, lay heavy on my heart.

Jacques, as I said, had been trying, in a certain way, to make friends with me; but all his pleasant words, which would have been valued at so high a price one month before, were worthless, coming so late. Pleasant words from one whom we have ceased to love are like paper *assignats*—bearing only a seeming value, with nothing behind to uphold it.

It was, I remember, the twenty-fifth of August, and the day was very warm. Jacques and my father were home so seldom then, and their coming was so doubtful, that I had grown used to not expecting them. Moreover, I had grown to have such an unreasoning terror of Jacques that at times I could not sleep for fear he might return. I had, I remember, just received my letter, and had almost finished the reading. But as the light was dim, I had gone in search of a candle, and was holding the paper close to the flame in order to see more easily. Henri seemed sad at heart, and was anxious to go at once against the enemy. He said, not being careful to choose his words, that he had never before had the least idea of the ruin which the revolution had wrought; all law but mob-law was done away, and murder and outrage prevailed. He wrote of the tenth of August, the news of which had just reached



him. But he did not look upon it as Jacques did, and my father ; he said rather, that if patriotism had come to such an evil pass, the best thing for a patriot was to die.

And this I was reading when Jacques suddenly appeared. Very likely if I had continued to the end he would have left me to myself. But, acting without thought, I folded my letter in guilty haste, and was about to thrust it in my pocket, when Jacques caught my hand.

"What is that?" he asked briefly, but in a determined way, which I knew it would be hard to resist.

"It is my letter," I answered, holding it with all my strength—"a letter from Henri."

"That may be," said Jacques, with a hard laugh ; "but I mean to read it all the same."

I brought up my other hand, and before he could guess what I was about to do, I had torn my letter in a hundred pieces and thrown them on the floor.

Jacques lifted his hand—such a heavy hand—and struck me a blow on the breast. I staggered back against the wall and gasped for breath. But I set my teeth tightly in my lip lest I should cry or moan ; and when I saw him stoop to gather up the pieces from the floor, I too stooped blindly, and grasping all that I could I held them in the flame of the candle until my fingers were scorched.

Jacques looked up with an evil glare.

"Oh, don't trouble yourself," he said. "I have quite enough ;" and as he spoke he pushed me back into the nearest chair.

I watched him as he held the pieces close to the candle, trying to match them together. I am not sure whether he could learn anything from them ; but when he had finished he came close to me, and bent down to look in my face.

"I am not astonished that you wished to hide your letter," he said. "Do you know I could send your brother to the guillotine as easily as I could eat my dinner?"



"And would that give you pleasure, Jacques?" I asked faintly.

"I am not thinking of my own pleasure now-a-days," said Jacques. "A patriot has no pleasure but his country's good. 'Que mon nom soit flétri que la France soit libre!'"

And then, as I had nothing to reply, he added further, "There is quite enough in those scraps of paper to serve as a charge of treason. He shall come back to Paris, that brother of thine, where he can be well observed. I will see to that."

He put the bits of paper in his pocket then, and laughing in my face, ordered me to give him his supper.

The pain in my breast was very great, but that in my heart was greater. I thought I should have died with terror and grief, not for myself, but for Henri. And it was that very night that the Lady Marguerite put her question; and I told her of the letter which had come to me, but I did not tell her anything further.

She sighed gently, and then said that he was happier there, in face of the enemy, than here in Paris.

"But you, dear lady," I said,—"*you* do not want the enemy driven back?"

"Because they are not *my* enemies," she said, with a patient smile. "They are my hope, and the hope of my dear queen. I strain my ears, Manon, for the roar of Brunswick's cannon. Every day brings them nearer. Ah, God speed the army of deliverance!" Then seeing my troubled face, she added hastily, "Forgive me, dear; I would not grieve thee for a kingdom. And since thou art praying for one side, and I for the other, doubtless thy prayers will win."

I had no heart to reproach her; but having a foolish tongue I could not forbear saying,—

"There is one in that other army, dear lady, who would be right glad to die for you."

The colour rose to her face, flushing it a beautiful crimson.



I could not tell if she were angry, for she dropped her eyes and gave a soft little laugh, but would not look at me.

"Forgive me," I said, "for speaking such foolish words, which Henri would never have spoken himself."

"Nay, would he not?" she said gently, as one who knows better. And then she laughed again, merrily, as if for gladness of heart; and I wondered at her that she could be merry at thought of Henri's death.

On the Sunday following, such news arrived that it seemed likely the Lady Marguerite would have her wish. Brunswick was already at Verdun, and was coming rapidly on towards Paris. All day the tocsin pealed; and only the thought of Madame Fabre kept that dear lady from showing her face at the window. Her eyes shone with a strange excitement. I could see that her lips were constantly setting themselves to the music in her heart. Little snatches of song trembled upon them, held back through fear of grieving me. The deliverance was coming—such a brave deliverance! And all her troubles were creeping into the past.

For myself, my old patriotism, which had slumbered for many days, revived that morning. Why should it not, with a foreign enemy marching against my country, and ruin on every hand?

Some one said at last—some old man whom I hailed as he was passing—that all good citizens were enlisting. But the trouble was, no one felt willing to go and leave danger threatening their homes.

"Danger at home!" I cried. "They themselves will be between Brunswick and their homes, and can best ward off the danger."

"The danger is nearer than Brunswick," said he, with a wise nod of his head. He seemed but a feeble old man, and was, I doubt not, ready to believe all that one told him. "There is a great aristocrat conspiracy. I don't quite understand; but all the prisoners are to be set free, and as



soon as the troops are off there will be a massacre of the citizens."

"But," I protested, "who would set free the prisoners? and what power would they have against the whole city?" And then, fearing lest my dear lady should come nearer in her eagerness, I had to leave the window and tell her what I had heard.

She gave a scornful little laugh. I think she would laugh if her heart were broken.

"That is like a conspiracy of the sparrows against the cats," she said—"and sparrows in cages, too. Ah, dear little Manon, let us pray that Brunswick may come quickly; I am so weary of it all."

And well she might be, poor lady, and much she needed to pray. If I had known then all that I know this morning, I too would have knelt by her side and prayed for her "army of deliverance" to come speedily. She lost her gladness as the day wore on, and trembled at the sound of the tocsin—even sitting with her hands upon her ears, that she might not hear it so plainly.

I could not bear it any longer at last, not knowing what was meant by the strange sounds which came to my ears; and so that afternoon I ventured out, making my lady promise to guard Félice in the garret until I returned. I had not gone very far—it was near the Pont Neuf, I think—when I fell in with a crowd of people, or seemed suddenly to be surrounded by them. They were following a train of carriages, and I saw that the carriages were full of priests. It flashed upon me in a moment to wonder what those long-robed Papists could have to do abroad on such a day as that. I never in all my life had had a feeling of sympathy for any of that hated class, and my first thought when I saw them was this: "Ah, you wretches! you are glorying now in the nation's shame, and in the coming of the enemy." But in an instant more I could see quite plainly that they were prisoners—not going of their own



free will—and that they had no cause to glory. I saw, too, that the crowd which followed were cursing and reviling them; even hanging to the steps of the carriages and mocking their victims through the open windows. Evil-hearted sons of Rome as they were, I could find no joy in their humiliation; no, not although I knew that, if they had the power, they would bring a second St. Bartholomew upon us. And knowing, as I do now, that those poor priests never reached the Abbaye, to which they were being carried, I can hope that even in the last moment, as they died like martyrs, God, for Christ's sake, was ready to assuage them.

I can pray for priests and Prussians now; I can weep and tremble for the king and queen. O my dear God! shall I ever forget those days which came after?

No one, save the little Félice, could sleep that night, for the air seemed full of sobs and cryings. It was a soft summer night, and no sound of Brunswick's cannon reached our ears; yet off to the eastward, far beyond the Hôtel de Ville, there were weird sounds, which distance only seemed to make more terrible. The city seemed all awake, and even through our quiet street people ran and called to each other. It might be, we thought, that Brunswick was really come at last, or that the aristocrats—impossible as it seemed—had risen against the people.

It seemed as though the morning would never dawn. Alas! for how many who had seen the sun setting it never dawned at all.

When I had given Félice her breakfast, I could endure the suspense no longer. Anything seemed better than to wait in silence, wondering and guessing. When the Lady Marguerite saw that I was setting myself to some desperate resolve, she took my hands in hers and looked pleadingly in my face. "Don't, dear Manon," she said; "don't go. There is something worse, I am sure, than even we have fancied."

And so for a little she held me back; but after a while I



said, "I will go only to the corner; and that I must, dear lady." And when she saw that my mind was set upon it, she let me go.

I went to the corner, and then a strange fascination drew me on and on toward those smothered sounds. And I know not how far I had gone when I met a great throng of people, and I saw that the Lady Marguerite had been well to stay me. The sight which I saw sent me shrieking homeward, as if the very powers of hell were in close pursuit; and perhaps they were. Why I was not cut down for my crying, God only knows. But I cared little, having no thought for anything but the beautiful, severed head which I had seen aloft, and the soft masses of hair with the stains of blood upon them.

That was all I thought of; that, and the cries and shouts of the people—of the women who danced and clapped their hands at such a vision of blood. I remembered even then the day when the multitude cried out upon my Lord. And now I think I can realize for ever what that scene was like when they shouted, "Away with him! crucify him!"

"What is it? what have you seen?" cried the Lady Marguerite, actually standing in the doorway and meeting me as I ran sobbing in. And at first I could not tell her; for I knew well that it was the face of Madame de Lamballe that I had seen, and that this Lady Marguerite loved her. But little by little—I forget how it was—the news reached us that all the aristocrats were being slaughtered in the prisons; one and another who was passing would tell me—some exultingly, and some with low, hurried words and anxious glances over their shoulders.

And when I lost all courage, and was ready to despair, that dear lady became my comforter. It seemed as though the depth of her misery, and the loss of those she loved, had made her strong. She bade me trust in God, and told me that heaven was very near, and that it mattered little by what road we entered it.



And so it went on day after day, until I wondered if it was really God's beautiful earth on which we were living, or if we were not among lost souls in the regions where God's face never shines. "O my God!" I cried through the long day, "are thine ears grown heavy that they cannot hear?" And she, that dear lady, would say, with her eyes full of tears, but bravely still, "God has not forgotten, little Manon; some day we shall understand. Many who love him are going home by short roads in these days."

I did not venture forth again. When the wind was eastward I closed my ears with both my hands to shut out those sounds of death. People have eaten just the same, I believe, and have slept. They have closed their doors and windows, and have gone long distances out of their way, to avoid seeing what was better left unknown. But *I* could not eat, and slept only when weariness overcame me. It is not so very long ago that I heard my father agree with Jacques that the best way to conquer the enemy without the walls was to cut off the enemy within. But talking is not doing, and he has changed greatly within the past few months. When we meet at table now we sit and gaze blankly at each other, and the food is left unnoticed between us. Sometimes he will strive to eat a mouthful or two, and will almost choke in the effort; but we say little.

I never knew before that my father loved me so well; perhaps he never did in those old days. Every time that we part he takes my hands in his and presses them to his lips and to his heart, and at night he watches me all the way up the stair.

I remember one night, while those terrible days lasted, I said to him as he started for the street, "Will it ever, *ever* be over?"

"God only knows," he said with a groan.

"But, father, it is too terrible," I cried; and then I hid my face on his shoulder, and he felt how I was trembling. That



day a rumour had reached me—from whence I know not—that, having almost finished the prisons, the murderers would next go through private houses in search of victims.

He did not say, as he would once have done, "This is God's vengeance;" but he held me close to him and groaned again, as if he felt the weight of a burden heavier than he could bear.

"O father! stay," I said; "do not leave me to-night."

"I must," he answered, "for your safety, child, and mine. All who are not abroad are 'suspect.' It is the aristocrats who abide at home. Keep the shutters drawn, and let no one see you."

"O my father!" I said—for I could no longer forbear—"let us not shrink from *such* danger, you and I. Do not put a burden on your conscience, or have blood-marks on your soul. O my dear father! the Lord himself bids us not 'fear them that kill the body,' but rather 'him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'"

And my father shuddered—I felt him tremble as I clung about his neck—but he put me from him all the same, and went out into the darkness.

All this time I had seen nothing of Jacques, for which I daily gave thanks. I think if he had been present, with all the rest that I had to bear, I should have lost my reason. The fury of the massacre was almost over when he returned, and yet he surely had blood-stains upon his hands and clothing. I gave him his food in silence; but he seemed right merry, or tried to be so. He even offered to kiss me once when I came near him, but I sprung quickly aside.

"Well, well," he said, "how you do harbour the thought of an injury, *mon amie*. You may be glad enough some day of the kisses you refuse."

"I shall never be glad to kiss a man who is stained with blood," I answered.

And then he looked at his hands with an oath. "I made



my toilet in a hurry," he answered. "But it doesn't matter; everything is so drenched with blood that one cannot walk the streets without a stain."

And I held my peace. And so our long misery came to an end at last.



XXX.

*A SURPRISE.*

THOSE September days were over at last, and whatever might yet be in store for her, Marguerite remained still unharmed. Hope began once more to lift its head ; nothing seemed unendurable after the hours when they had kept that silent house together—Marguerite and Manon and the child.

As there are feelings which will not admit of words, so they could never put into speech the agony which each suffered from that Sunday afternoon to the Thursday which came after. Manon kept the blinds close drawn ; and when there was nothing to be done to drive away the memory of suffering, they sat and held each other's hands, praying silently in their hearts. Each thought most of the peril to those she loved : Marguerite remembered fearfully those with whom her life had been bound these five years past, and Manon wept for her father.

There was one thing which Marguerite had never explained which often recurred to her in these days. Not long after she had taken refuge with them, Manon had gone out, leaving Félice and Marguerite alone in the attic, where, in the course of time, Félice became very thirsty, and begged for water in her childish, irresistible way. "I can go down and get it all myself, dear lady," she said, "if you will only let me."

"That you shall not, you intangible white spirit," said Marguerite cheerily. "Your little limbs will hardly bear you on level ground. Sit here and watch from the window while I bring it to you."



Félice, like other children, a democrat at heart, knowing no distinction but one of years, saw no fitting reason why this dear lady should not do her errands. She smiled in a docile fashion, saying that she liked to remain with the mice, and was not at all afraid.

But after Marguerite had found the water, she could not forbear pausing at the window a moment to see if Manon were coming; and so, the window being low and opened wide, she found herself face to face with M. d'Arblay. The sudden apparition made her turn pale with fear; but he spoke quickly, in low, decided tones. "Go at once from the window; but open the door a moment, that I may speak with you. I promise to leave you in peace."

Marguerite reluctantly obeyed; and then, standing in the shadow behind the door, he spoke to her with eager haste. "I have been watching daily here for a glimpse of your face," he said; "for I remembered that Annette used to come here in other times. I have been tortured with suspense on your account. O Marguerite, why do you distrust me?"

He did not touch her hand nor approach her in any way, but stood gazing on her face as though it were the last glimpse he ever hoped to have of it to the end of time.

"I do not distrust you, Monsieur d'Arblay," she said, "but neither do I love you."

"I am going this day to the frontier," he went on. "If there were any use, I should stay to protect you; but you tie my hands. The day may come when, through much suffering, you will turn to me; and, Marguerite," he pleaded, drawing closer to her, and taking her hands in a sort of patient despair, "when that day comes I shall be waiting. Nothing that you can do or say will turn me from you."

He kissed her hands, and she did not draw them away; this much she was willing to give in return for his devotion. It was just after this that Manon, returning, found the tears upon her lashes.



That September week was hardly over when Félice was taken ill, and as the little life flickered like a candle from day to day Marguerite almost forgot her own danger in helping to care for the child. She grew paler and more frail with all this watching and with the close confinement ; but the same gentle dignity which drew the eyes of the crowd, even when she was wrapped in Annette's faded cloak, sat upon her still. Only in her eyes one might see a look of mute appeal, as in some dumb creature driven to its last covert.

She sat one afternoon just at sunset watching by Félice. Manon had consented at last to give her a bit of sewing to do for the child, and she had drawn from her pocket a small gold thimble—the only thing of value which had been about her on that terrible Friday—and had sat stitching as long as the light served her, with dry eyes but a heavy heart.

Manon meanwhile moved about here and there, preparing the table for supper, looking from time to time with an anxious glance at the street or a tender one at Marguerite.

"Citoyenne Manon," said the latter playfully at last, "come and sit down a minute."

Manon obeyed—or rather she knelt before her friend and looked up in her face.

"You have not told me for a long time of your brother," said Marguerite, and as she spoke, although her voice was steady, the colour stole into her face and her eyes fell.

"I have had but that one letter, dear lady," said Manon gently. "He was well then, and seemed brave at heart. But I was not deceived."

"How?" asked Marguerite, a little tremor visible in the moving of her fingers.

Manon looked up with a grave, serious face, and their eyes met.

"You should pray for him, dear lady, and pity him," she said bravely ; "for whether one is high or low does not alter one's real manhood. And it is God who plants true love in a man's heart whether he be peer or peasant."



The warm colour rose again in Marguerite's face. Two years ago it might have been a flush of indignation ; now she answered gently, laying her hand on Manon's,—

"What do you mean, dear child?"

"I mean that since he gives all his life, without thought of reward, to you, dear lady, you should pity and pray for him."

"Call me Citoyenne Marguerite then," said the other, with a smile, "and so I will, Manon."

"That I cannot do," said Manon quickly.

"Manon dear," said Marguerite, with a show of lightness, "you are dreaming. No one can read a man's heart. Henri Beaupré would be a true knight to any luckless maiden ; but you, Manon, you dwell so much alone that you create romances."

"I cannot prove what I say," said Manon bravely ; "some things cannot be proved. But I think you know your own self, Lady Marguerite, that my words are true."

"I have had too many lovers," said Marguerite, with a pathetic little laugh, "not to mistrust them all."

As she spoke there was a sudden step under the window and a knock upon the door. Marguerite raised her head, and the look of appeal passed into her eyes. She stooped, and kissing Manon once or twice, sprung to her feet and ran quickly into the other room, where she crouched behind a hanging of faded tapestry.

She had no opportunity to do more than this before Annette opened to herself and entered the little sitting-room. Marguerite could hear her voice ; a hard, pitiless voice it was—all the harder for its jesting tone. Manon had been too much startled to be naturally busy over her household duties, and Annette was laughing at her.

"What is the matter?" she cried saucily. "Have you had a shock, or are your nerves perpetually unstrung? Ah, *bah!* it is the ghost of the poor Swiss, I suppose. You had better beware, my cousin, or there may be other ghosts to haunt you. My uncle is becoming 'suspect' for harbouring traitors."



"My father had nothing to do with it," was the low reply.

"Oh, had he not indeed?" cried Annette. "Well, really this is cozy. Shall we have supper soon, and does a true patriot like Jacques have aught better than brown bread, I wonder? Oh, but I am tired! It is very wearisome being a patriot."

There was silence for a few moments, and Marguerite could hear Manon's light step moving about the room. Suddenly Annette spoke again; her words set Marguerite's heart to beating.

"A gold thimble! Why, Manon," she said, "I really wonder at your want of faith. Don't you know that all such baubles are forfeited to the nation? One can't keep silver or gold when the Republic is in need. Ah well, hide it; no one will be the wiser. I may not be very tender-hearted, but blood is blood, and I should not like to see you on the scaffold."

Now Marguerite, who could hear distinctly every word that was spoken, realized that this thimble must be well known to Annette. It was stamped with a curious little crest which one would be apt to remember; and the thought came suddenly to her mind that her own days were numbered. She might flee to her attic, but where was there a corner so close that Annette could not follow and unveil her secret?

"So the dear uncle had naught to do with it, eh?" said Annette. "I am glad; for I was always fond of *mon oncle*. But, Manon dear, as we are speaking of ghosts, I think this little house has become a gathering-place for them. M. Douet saw the ghost of a fair lady wandering past the windows yesterday evening—the spirit of one whom he had seen in life. He was so curious over it that he came with me to the door to-night, though he would not enter."

Annette laughed, and her laugh was very merry. The tones were harder than they used to be; there was something cruel in them. Marguerite remembered another time when she had



heard a mocking laugh from behind a tapestry hanging in that very house—a cruel laugh like this.

For herself, she was busy laying her plans to shield Manon and Manon's father. In no way could she save herself; for her no door of hope stood open. There was a chance, however, that by leaving this roof, which had ceased to be a refuge, she might, by falling at once into the hands of the officers of the Republic, guard the friend who had protected her from suspicion and discovery. The night would be a dark one; alas! she thought, if it were but a cold one also—so very cold that, creeping into some quiet corner, God's kindly death would come to her relief before a ghastlier one could overtake her.

Manon was silent all this time; she had simply remarked that she was glad M. Douet had the sense not to enter.

"Shame on you for a poor patriot!" said Annette at last. "One never sees you at the Club or the Convention. I believe you are hatching treasons at home. You would be 'suspect' soon enough if it were not for your most excellent husband. By the way," with another laugh, "is he as good a husband as he is a patriot?"

"O Annette," cried Manon, with something like a groan, "how can you ever laugh again after those terrible days! I have been watching for the sky to darken and God's thunderbolts to fall."

"Pshaw!" said Annette; "you are growing moody because you sit so much alone. You think nothing when an army marches to battle and kills ten thousand or so. Here were the Prussians close upon us, and our troops about to march against them, leaving us in the hands of worse enemies at home. A pretty time we should have had."

"O my God!" cried Manon, with solemn earnestness, "she seeks to find excuse for those atrocities!"

"I shall set your husband to lecture you," said Annette, laughing again.

She seemed very merry that evening.



"Guard well your little thimble, my cousin," she said in parting. "It seems dainty for such a plain little woman as you; but doubtless Jacques was in a tender mood when he gave it to you."

Marguerite could hear her going to the door, and Manon's quiet steps returning.

"I will not trouble her kind heart with my plans," she said to herself. "I will kiss her for 'good-night,' and that will answer for farewell—a last farewell. And when the house is still I will go out like a maiden of romance to seek my fortune again. Alas that all the knights-errant have vanished from the land!"

Had they—*all*?

Marguerite did not confess to have overheard what passed. But she carried out her resolution so far as to kiss Manon when they parted for the night, and to pray God bless her for her tender care. Also she remembered to ask for her thimble, lest, being found upon Manon, it should serve as proof that she had harboured an aristocrat.

And then, as though suddenly remembering something, she took Manon's face in her hands and kissed her again on either cheek, saying softly,—

"Do not think, dear Manon, that I am careless of such a love as Henri's, or that I could make light of it."

"I thought, perhaps, you were angry that he should dare to love you," said Manon. "I know he has no hope of living for you. I think he would be glad to die, if that would serve you, dear Lady Marguerite."

"Oh, not that," said Marguerite quickly; "that would never serve me."

And then she put down her proud little head on Manon's shoulder and sobbed like a child; and in her own heart Manon could not but wish, however unwisely, that Henri were there to comfort her.

When Marguerite had reached the attic, with a tender fore-



thought she pulled to pieces her little bed—setting it in a dark corner, where it might pass for discarded household stuff—and folded the coverlet, which she laid away in an unlocked chest. She also searched the floor for stray crumbs which might betray her secret; and having settled all to her liking, and the house being already still, she wrapped her cloak—M. d'Arblay's cloak—about her, and stole softly down the stairs.

In the lower hall Manon met her face to face with a lighted candle.

"I was coming to speak to you, dear lady," she said. "Félice seems worse, and I wanted you to look at her."

Marguerite forgot for the moment what had been in her mind. Dropping her cloak, which Manon had not noticed, she followed into the bedroom, where the little one lay tossing with fever. One with less wisdom than Manon or Marguerite could not have failed to see that the child was very ill; and though neither of them had much skill in medical lore, yet Manon had many time-honoured theories, and certain bundles of herbs by the aid of which she could put them into practice.

Since Félice clung to Manon, not willing to miss her for a moment, Marguerite went to the kitchen with her candle, to prepare the remedy which had been chosen between them. It was a simple thing to do, and the water was already hot on the fire. But as she stood stirring the potion curious fancies assailed her. It seemed as though she might be a woman of the people preparing an evening meal for some one who was coming. She even smiled—people will smile sometimes in the sorest straits; and she was so young, with so much to make life a dream of delight, and yet with life followed hard by death. She set down the candle, and remembering something which she had almost forgotten, laid her hand upon her heart and sighed.

There were footsteps outside, which seemed to pause before the door, and the low sound of voices. The curtain was drawn and the light was dim, but Marguerite trembled. Would the potion never boil?



She feared that her shadow might be cast upon the curtain, and feared to look, or even to change the position of the candle, lest that should betray her. The voices ceased suddenly, the steps seemed to move on ; and as she took courage to move the light, the potion began to boil.

She smiled that she should be faint-hearted over such a small matter as a passing footstep, when so many feet were going through the night. Still a shudder passed over her as she poured the tea hastily into a bowl ; and when, on reaching the door, she heard voices and steps at the rear of the house, she knew that her time had come.

Blowing out her candle, but still carrying the bowl, she passed into the entry, which was faintly lighted still ; for at the head of the stairs stood Manon with a lamp in her hand, her eyes dilated with horror and her breath coming quick and hard. Terror had taken full possession of that quiet little woman.

"O my dear lady ! fly to the attic !" she cried ; "I will die before they touch you."

Marguerite smiled ; her smile had the bitterness of death in it, which Manon could not see.

"Quiet your heart, Manon dear," she said, moving past her into the chamber where Félice was moaning with fever ; "I am going to give the little one her potion. There is no hiding-place for me."

As for Manon, she had only time to descend the stairs, which she did like one in a dream, when she met face to face her husband, with two municipal guards. Dimly, through the faint light, she could see in the background Annette and her friend.

"It seems," said Jacques with an oath, "that my house has become a refuge for aristocrats. You and that old man your father shall answer for this, *mon amie*."

"My father is no friend to aristocrats ; you know it well !" cried Manon, turning instinctively aside to ward off the blow from the old man whom she loved.



"My house belongs to the nation!" cried Jacques.—"Officers, do your work."

"O great God! how can one be so treacherous and cruel?" gasped Manon in despair, throwing herself prone upon the stairs under the very feet of the officers.

But Jacques only laughed—a hard, brutal laugh—and catching her by the arm, would have flung her to the ground as relentlessly as he had fired upon the wounded soldier, had not Marguerite herself suddenly appeared at the head of the stairs. Stately and serene, as though she had been called to a *levée* of the king, she confronted Jacques and the officers of justice.

"*Citoyens*," she said in gracious tones, "I pray you take no further trouble. It was *I* who came for refuge here, and no one else is accountable."

Her eyes went further then and met those of Annette. For an instant Annette returned her gaze; then, obdurate as she was, her eyes fell before the keen, reproachful look of her lady.

At the foot of the stairs Marguerite stooped, with the hands of those wretched men already grasping her arms, and kissed Manon's poor white face.

"God will bless you," she said softly, "as *I* do."

But as she passed out into the night she shivered, although the air was balmy and soft; for behind Annette she had seen the face of the man who hated her, and she knew that his vengeance was accomplished.

All through that long night Manon sat and watched beside Félice. Toward morning the fever began to cool in the veins of the child, and her pulse became more quiet; but the fever at the heart of the watcher burned steadily and long. Marguerite and her danger occupied all Manon's thoughts that night. In fact, it was not until twilight of the following afternoon that she began seriously to consider the bearing which these events might have upon her father's safety. He seldom failed to appear at home at some one hour of the twenty-four, and yet she had not seen him now for nearly two full days.



It was nearing on toward night again, yet still he lingered. Had the sessions become more permanent than even in those days of terror, that there was not found one hour for his coming? She began unconsciously to strain her ears for the sound of his step in the street. It had grown so feeble in the last few months; yet she knew it from any other.

The night was very quiet. Leaning from the window, she could see the moon slowly rising over the house-tops, and the light of it creeping up the narrow street. Félice was sleeping calmly; the house was silent as the grave, with that brooding silence when the sound of one's own heart-beats seems like "an army with banners."

She put her head within, and drew the curtains with a tremulous fear lest unseen eyes should gaze upon her; and so the hours passed until midnight, and still Manon could not rest. There were many other fathers throughout that restless city who had failed to return on many nights like this; many other watchers besides Manon had waited and longed in vain. It had never entered her fancy that some day *her* father might be among the missing ones, and she be watching vainly. She recalled now for the first time how he had lingered in saying farewell to her, on that last morning when she parted from him—how his voice had trembled when he had taken her in his arms and whispered hoarsely, "God bless thee, my dear little Manon!" Was this possibly a long farewell? and should she never listen to word of his again—her poor old father? Very hard and bitter he had been at times, but not often so to her; all that she remembered now was his love and tenderness to *her*. All his wrath and vituperation, his rancour against the queen and the aristocrats, which she might have recalled at another time, were swept away from her remembrance now. The ill which he had done was wrought through evil influence; his good was all his own.

So she glorified him with loving touches, as one puts flowers about the dead whose memory is sacred.



The night wore slowly away, and the morning dawned at last; and still Manon listened for a footfall which never came.

For even before she had begun to think upon his danger, old André Beaupré had been denounced to the people by some unknown enemy as a harbourer of aristocrats, a traitor to the Republic. It needed but a single voice, or even a suspicious glance, to brand a man in those days. And the old man, fearing the worst, had dreaded to leave the council chamber, lest he should fall in with the rough handling of the mob without. However, as the second night wore on, remembering that sorrowful little woman who loved and waited for him, he started at last in a desperate humour for his home.

He had gone but a few steps from the council chamber when the light of the full moon, shining on his face, betrayed him; and his name, so lately blackened, was passed from mouth to mouth. There needed no further judgment for the crowd to fall upon him. Others with cleaner hands and less accusing consciences had been dealt with so before, but few who had more ardently loved the wretches who assailed them.

Old Beaupré, knowing well that his hours were numbered, called to mind in that supreme moment many things which he had long forgotten. He had neither strength to struggle nor presence of mind to plead his cause.

"O great God!" he cried out hoarsely, in his deep despair, "art thou also pitiless? Hast thou no mercy for a wretched sinner? O God! O God!"

"Ah," cried the rabble, mocking and jeering, and pressing closer about him, "he calls on God—*le scélérat*! Let him go to the good God without delay, this excellent man!"

In that one terrible moment there flashed upon André Beaupré's memory, with that strange power of recollection belonging to the hour of death, the thought of One who, in his dying agony so long ago, had called out upon his Father's name, and whom also the rabble jeered and mocked for his crying. The memory of that blessed death, that sinless sacrifice, came vividly



before the mind of this poor old sinner in his dire extremity. Perhaps, even at the eleventh hour, with the thought of that Offering in his heart, the name of that Saviour on his lips, he may have received the pity from an injured God which he could not hope for from his fellow-men.

He suffered death, not for his sins, but for one gleam of pity and human kindness which had lightened his sinful life. For while Manon waited and watched, with a prescience of coming evil in her heart, and while the midnight hour was slowly tolling out, old André Beaupré looked his last at the shining of the stars and the glimmer of the moonlight on the towers of that city he loved so well, and his soul went out to God.



XXXI.

*IN LA FORCE.*

MARGUERITE WRITES.

*January 1798.*

THE winter days have come again, and the weather is cold. We suffer sometimes a little for lack of fire, but one does not give much thought to bodily discomfort now. Distress over trifles belongs to the days which have gone by; we have done with that.

I have been in this old prison-house for three long months, as men count time. I think *we* count it more as eternity is counted, and it seems to have no end. It is needful to keep a careful written account amongst us, or one would never know either the month or the day.

I suppose this season of terror may deal no more death than the ravaging of some frightful plague or pestilence; yet one can but feel with King David that one would so much rather "fall into the hands of God" than into those of men.

This place seems like the very "gate of hell" to me. I cannot get over the horror and shuddering with which I entered it. The blood-stains from those September days have been hardly cleansed away, and the air is heavy and foul with odours of corruption. One always thinks of blood—of blood which has been shed, and of blood which still is shedding. The smell of death has been sealed up here from the air of heaven, and will never more escape.

It seemed as though hope were dead in my heart the night



they brought me here ; but when one gets to what may be the very worst, then sometimes hope will spring afresh. So, if I lost the sunshine, I gained Gabrielle, and that was something surely. When I opened my eyes that Tuesday morning I saw her first standing and looking down upon me with such joy and love in her eyes ; and I thought it was a vision—or else, perhaps, that I had already died, and Gabrielle had met me in the other world. But when she knelt and threw her arms about me, I saw that she was too substantial for a vision, and too merry for a heavenly visitant. Her lightness of heart seemed more terrible to me than even the blood-stains on the ground.

“ Gabrielle dear,” I said, “ pray do not laugh ; how can you ? ”

“ If I did not laugh, I should weep,” said Gabrielle ; “ and which is better ? Laughter cheats death of its misery.”

And when I looked at her more closely, I saw that there were dark circles under her eyes, and that her smile was forced and fleeting.

We were in the room with five others, Gabrielle and I, with each a bundle of straw for our beds. Truly it was little like Versailles or even the Tuileries. But the fact which was a balm to all our sufferings, which made it easy to smile at little troubles, was that we were among friends, not merely companions in misery, but those of gentle breeding like ourselves, who kept the same memories, and suffered for the same crime—love of the king. At first I almost forgot my troubles in the embraces of those noble ladies, and their loving voices strengthened my heart.

And so, being by nature light-hearted myself, I began to understand how Gabrielle could bear to laugh, and how smiles and good-fellowship were the order of the day. For although one misses every outward luxury and comfort, yet friendly sympathy, the gentle courtesies of life, and all the outward signs of inward culture, are never wanting to us ; and one grows wonted after a little to the thought that to-morrow or



next day one may be rudely thrust aside and led to death. It is just as one grows used, in every quiet life, to the wonderful thought of a certain death which is coming—*some time*. One grows used to that, because one has always known it to be inevitable, not to be overcome, and so one seldom thinks of it at all until one must. When at times the reality of the thought breaks in upon one's reason, one stands shuddering for a moment, and turns away.

So with us: we know what is before us, and sometimes—yes, often—we realize the meaning of it, but we also resolutely turn away. Death by the guillotine is not quite so sure to come as the sure death which comes to all of us—*some time*.

Every day we spend some hours taking exercise in a dismal corridor, damp and dimly lighted. There the noble ladies and gentlemen who are in confinement here meet and talk together over the days that are past. Then if one closes one's eyes, it is easy to imagine oneself at Versailles or the Trianon, for courtesy and gentle manners triumph over the cruelty of the Republic. Now, if never before, our society is truly the *élite* of France—strong souls and true hearts, who dared to brave death for their honour and the king.

I soon learned that by common consent they said little of the things which lay nearest their hearts, but every one did his utmost to strengthen the courage of the others. Certainly in this they are less wise than if they rested their strength on the love of the Lord, but wiser than if they gave way to abject and foolish repining.

It touches my heart to see those dear ladies arranging their hair and adjusting their plain costumes with the most becoming grace, and the gentlemen shaved as carefully as though they were at a *levée* of the king. It may be a pitiful sight, but I think it is a brave one, and unconsciously I have caught the gracious spirit of it. I, too, arrange my hair, and make myself as fair as I can. But since I have known from the first that each of these merry talkers has a canker in his soul, and I have



found a balm to heal such soul-distress, I have not been able to keep my good things to myself.

It would not do to say, "We are in such hourly danger of death, let us flee to God for a refuge:" that would be speaking of things which by common consent we avoid. But I have spoken many times of God's great tenderness to us, and how, if we rest in the love of his dear Son, there is no need that any shadow should darken our lives; for in such a case every road, when it comes to its very worst, leads to the gates of heaven. And since every one fears in his own heart that *his* road has come to the very worst already, that is enough. And so God has given me grace to speak as the opportunities have come. One cannot always be cheerful—there must be times when even the bravest yield; and many of these dear people are earnest at heart, and are glad to have something enduring and strong like the love of God to think of. It means more to them than they will allow—that hope of a better life.

But the misery rests in this—every week so many more are missing. The prison is a little world in itself; the inhabitants come and go, as they do in the outer world. Those who go, go to death; and those who come, enter into the prospect of it.

And this thought is always in my mind, even when I smile; for I have learned to smile again—not to laugh and jest as Gabrielle does. Yet it may be that her heart is even more heavy than mine, poor child!

Little news ever comes to us from the other world—outside of our prison—and one cannot always pretend to oneself that there is no special reason for wishing it. But tidings of the king's trial reached our ears; and then we heard of his death. *That* sorrow was so great that we forgot our rôle of cheerfulness—forgot everything but that good king who had gone home to God. It was about that time, I think, that I received one day a little note which was secretly conveyed to me by a kind-hearted *gendarme*; for even these keepers of ours have sometimes tender hearts. Even sometimes a royalist will



take such thankless duty as that of prison-guard, for the sake of the help which he may give to those in trouble.

I hid the note unread in my bosom—there is always an under-current of alarm in this strange life we are leading—and I thought upon it all the day ; but when I ventured to open it that evening, the first words brought a chill of disappointment to my heart. It is needless to say what I had hoped ; one is foolish to cherish any hope at such a time as this. Yet through all these months of terror the thought of my God, and after him of one other, has been my stay. I could not put the fancy from me that if he whose memory was so dear to me knew where I was, he would brave the terrors of death to set me free. A foolish thought, indeed ; for what could one man do against such frightful odds ?

I could see that one of the ladies, who had thrown herself upon her miserable pallet, lay with her arms above her head, watching me while I read. This lady's face had been growing wan and pale, and her eyes had a peculiar brightness which made one fear that she could read one's thoughts.

What I read was an appeal from M. d'Arblay, who had returned from the frontier, and who had only discovered my place of confinement within the last few days. He would, he said, gladly save me upon any terms, but he was powerless unless I would consent to become his wife. He also assured me that my life was in imminent danger—that *he* only could save me.

"Well, my dear, what is it?" suddenly asked the lady who was watching. Gabrielle and I both started at her words ; yet since we have learned to trust each other in this wretched place, I told her freely from whom the letter came, and what the writer had asked of me.

"That is a glimpse into Elysium, my love," she said shortly. "Let him save you if he can, on any terms. It is your only chance. We are all doomed."

As this poor lady had been the merriest of all, her words



seemed to strike fresh terror to my heart. And then she repeated more gently, "If any one can help you, my sweet child, let him do it in his own way, and we shall all rejoice for your sake."

"Ah yes!" echoed Gabrielle, half sobbing, and turning away to hide the tears in her eyes. "He is noble; it is no disgrace; let him save you."

Yet notwithstanding all that Gabrielle and the good lady had advised, I tore off the back of M. d'Arblay's note and wrote upon it:—"Many thanks to M. d'Arblay. Marguerite de Clairac still prefers death to bearing the name of a traitor."

And the next day I sent it by the same safe messenger to that most persistent gentleman.

*October 1793.*

I said that I had learned to smile in spite of a heavy heart; but during the last few weeks so many whom I loved have been called away from our little *coterie*, that it is hard to withhold one's tears. To be sure, it is always possible to weep in the silence of the night, and that, in all good reason, should suffice. Yet sometimes, even with all my desire to be strong, I cannot help looking with wonder at the unreality of our life; and I doubt the wisdom of men who stand on the very borders of eternity, and who laugh and jest as though life were a pageant. The little festivities and theatrical shows jar upon me. It seems like dancing at a funeral or in a graveyard—a fearful dance of death.

They are learning a little drama now, some of these merry folk; and even since they have begun, one of the principal actors has been called to the terrible tribunal, and his place filled by another. If one must not weep, one need not surely make a mockery of death.

While she was preparing yesterday to take her *rôle*, Gabrielle turned to me suddenly and asked a question.

"Do you remember," she said, "that Marquis de Nesle, who



held a command in the body-guards—the ‘saintly marquis’ some one called him? I think he used to be fond of you, *ma mie*.”

And truly, God knows, although my heart has wandered far from its allegiance, the mention of that name brought suddenly to my heart a feeling of the old loyalty which I had striven so hard to keep in other days.

“I remember him, Gabrielle,” I answered.

And Gabrielle chatted on while she arranged her beautiful yellow hair.

“Yes, one would scarcely forget him,” she said; “there was a fascination about him. I always thought he would make a hero, he was so gallant and courteous. I wish he had loved *me*, Marguerite.”

“I wish he had, Gabrielle,” I answered gently.

Gabrielle turned and looked fixedly at me, doubting if I really meant what I said.

“Some one told me about him yesterday,” she went on. “Poor fellow! what very old news one does receive in these days.”

“O dear Gabrielle! what did you hear?” I asked.

“He died in those frightful *Septembriades*,” said Gabrielle with a shudder, turning suddenly white. “Alas! how hard one’s heart becomes when one lives in France and hears of naught but tragedies. Do not weep, dear Marguerite,” she cried, suddenly noticing the tears in my eyes, and throwing her arms about me.

But as she spoke, I remembered with a touch of remorse the tender devotion which he had always shown to me, and the meagre dole of kindness which I had measured out in return.

And so, having weighed the matter, I asked Gabrielle if she were quite sure of what she told me. Gabrielle had resumed her toilet, but she turned half toward me, poising herself lightly with her hands above her head, and the long folds of her hair dropping from them. “Am I sure?—why yes,” she re-



peated. "Let me see—who was it told me the story? That little dark man who was reprieved *by the mercy of the people*, then seized again a few weeks later and confined in this miserable place. He said M. de Nesle died like a brave man, crying, 'Vive le roi!'"

"Gabrielle dear," I told her then, "I was to have been the wife of M. de Nesle."

"Ah, poor heart, God pity you!" she exclaimed with instant tenderness; and then for a little we were silent, while Gabrielle adorned her pretty person with her few remaining ornaments.

"Something very strange occurred that day," she went on presently. "Just as they were about to put M. de Nesle to death, a young girl sprung out from the crowd—a decent, comely sort of girl—and declared that she knew the prisoner. 'My name is Annette Beaupré,' she said, 'and I know this man; he is no aristocrat.' Now, Marguerite dear, I remembered this, because, you know, it was the name of your own serving-maid. They asked her—those cruel wretches!—if she would drink a glass of aristocrat blood to save his life; and they laughed, thinking she would not dare. She hesitated just one moment, Marguerite, and then cried, 'Yes, I will!' and put the glass to her lips—that good gentleman himself saw her. Both he and M. de Nesle stood transfixed with horror at the sight; and M. de Nesle cried out, 'Great God, it is too much! God love you, poor Annette!'"

"O Gabrielle!" I cried, "could it have been Annette? I myself could not have done that."

"Oh no, of course not," said Gabrielle, tenderly rearranging her curls. "It is only the *canaille* who are capable of such bloody deeds. After all, it was no use, Marguerite; for when they told him to curse the king, he would not, and he died."

"Oh! God bless him!" I answered sobbing; and then after a moment, "Gabrielle, is there any one you love so dearly that you could save his life at such a fearful cost?"

"Holy Mother!" cried Gabrielle with dilated eyes, standing



still to gaze upon me ; “ *I drink human blood !* The saints forbid it, Marguerite ! ”

In a moment she came and knelt beside me. “ Could you ? ” she asked.

I answered shuddering, “ There is one man who has saved my life, for whom I would hardly count any cost, I think.”

“ *Bah !* ” said Gabrielle disdainfully ; “ there is no one but M. de Nesle for whom you should think of such sacrifice, and he does not need it, poor soul ! ” And then she added in low tones, “ I want to tell you how he died, Marguerite. He would not curse the king, nor cry, ‘ *Vive la nation !* ’ but he shouted in their faces, ‘ *Vive le roi !* ’ They pinned him fast to a pillar then with their pikes ; but with a great effort he pushed himself back, pressing against the pillar with his hands, and still cried with his dying gasp, ‘ *Vive le roi !* ’ He was a hero—your M. de Nesle.”

We sat silent then for a time, while I wept softly. But suddenly Gabrielle sprung to her feet. “ Ah, *bah !* ” she said ; “ let us be merry while we may, and cheat the nation ; at least let us *play* at merriment. Why, Marguerite, every day I listen to the roll-call with a great thumping at my heart. And when it is over, I say, ‘ There are two nights more, Gabrielle ; and there is always hope.’ ”

“ Poor child ! ” I cried. “ And if you hear your own name, Gabrielle ? ”

“ Ah,” she answered, sighing wearily, “ then I shall say to myself, as my dear *maman* used to say when I was about to have a tooth drawn, ‘ Be a brave little woman, my Gabrielle, be very brave. It will be but a moment’s pain, and all is over.’ ”

“ O Gabrielle ! ” I reasoned, “ will all really be over ? ”

“ So says the great Republic,” Gabrielle answered doggedly ; “ ‘ death is an eternal sleep.’ ”

“ O my dear ! ” I cried, clasping her in my arms, “ you and I know better than that. Your mother never taught you so, and you do not believe it.”



"No," she cried, beginning to sob wildly, and laying her head on my bosom, "I do not believe it. But my enemies will see no further than that, Marguerite; their triumph, at least, will be over."

"But *you* must go to appear before God," I insisted.

"If one dies for the good cause and the Holy Church," she sobbed, "one is absolved from all sin—one becomes a martyr."

"It is only God who absolves," I answered her, "for the sake of Jesus Christ."

Gabrielle wept and wrung her hands, still clinging to my side; but her passion of grief subsided presently. "Marguerite," she said at last, "night and day I am filled with terror, and God's angels seem so far away. If I am not merry, I can never be brave; and you know I must be brave. But you, Marguerite, shall teach me how to die."

And God grant me the grace and the time for this one service before he calls me hence—to teach that poor foolish Gabrielle the greatest lesson of all!



XXXII.

*A SLENDER HOPE.*

MANON'S RECORD.

1793.

I HAVE always loved that grand story of the three young Hebrews who walked unharmed in the midst of the fire in company with the Lord himself. I have thought of this often during the weary months which are passed, for it seems to me that I too have been walking through a furnace heated "seven times," and that the Lord has been with me. In such company the flames do not singe and one has no hurt. I can look upon things a little as the angels do—as one who stands apart, with great sorrow and tenderness for others, but without fear or trouble for myself. There is a certain point beyond which suffering becomes so great that one cannot struggle, and then one learns to rest.

It seems sometimes as if everything had gone; and then I sit down and remember that I have still Henri and Félice, and a little food, and that my liberty is precious. And if God takes all of these, I will still have Him; and if he takes my life, that may be the best of all. Only I could not bear to go and leave Félice.

There is another matter over which I give thanks, though truly it seems a strange cause for thanksgiving. I am glad in my heart when I think of the small grave which was made last month for my own little daughter. And truly, it is not the thought of the grave itself which makes me glad, for I do not



even know where it is—there are too many dead in these days for one to keep count of graves—but I am glad for the little sinless soul, which is safe “for ever with the Lord,” where no shadow of earth’s shame or stain can mar its beauty. I hope my little one may be as dear to Lucile as hers has been to me.

People disappear so strangely in these days where none can ever find them. I have not heard a word from my father since October last ; and though I have even humbled my pride so far as to beg that Jacques would tell me, it is all in vain. Sometimes he says that the Republic has sent my father on a mission to the mutinous provinces, sometimes he only curses me. “It is not altogether an *honourable* mission, either,” he added once. “If one is bent on harbouring traitors, one must meet the consequences. Your own life is forfeit, *mon amie*, and if it had not been for my sake, you would have lost it long ago.”

This is Jacques’s clemency, I suppose ; but clemency devoid of love, and for his own ends. It pleases him that I should take charge of his house, have his meals ready when he chooses to take them, and render him the service of a dutiful and helpful wife. Sometimes he even brings home other wretches to sit at table with him—Collot d’Herbois and St. Juste, and another vile creature called Hébert. They make my flesh creep as though they were reptiles or unclean beasts. He wants me to sit and eat with these and with other low Sansculottes whom he chooses to flatter and favour. When they and he are here we have abundance, and can feast like kings ; but when Félice and I are alone, sometimes we almost starve.

Many times when Marat has been here, as he is now and again, I have had it on my lips to ask where they had put my father ; but until yesterday I never dared, so cowardly have I grown. And even then, when the words had passed my lips, my heart stood still. “He is safe and quite comfortable, my child,” said that loathsome creature ; and then he patted my cheek and looked at Jacques, and they two laughed together. To me it was ghastly laughter.



The Mountain is all-powerful in these days, and Jacques says that France is at last become regenerate ; there will be no more rich or poor in all the land. No one shall be allowed more than a certain income, all that is over going back to the Republic, which like a tender mother will divide the surplus among her poorer children. Every one is to have work, and every one a home. Such a rich mother should surely be a provident one ; and the Republic has grasped not only all the property of the Romish Church, but also that of the *émigrés*, and of those who have suffered death in these cruel months. Neither can any one keep gold or silver for himself, since it all belongs to the nation. For ourselves, we had little to surrender, though Jacques has made great boast of giving all. It may not be such grievous sin to lie to one's country—such a country as *this*—but Jacques, I am sure, like Ananias, has “kept back part of the price.”

It is well for the poor, who have nothing to lose and much to gain ; but for those who, like Mère Gascoigne, have their little shops, and who try to earn their daily bread, the decrees are over-hard. She does not complain, being too good a patriot, but she will surely starve, for the prices are all set for her, and if she should charge a little more than is allowed, she would be reported as a “suspect”—an aristocrat. There is something droll in the thought of poor Mère Gascoigne, who helped to bring the king from Paris, being counted an aristocrat. But there never was a time when it was so easy to become an aristocrat as now ; so though Mère Gascoigne loses money every day, she dare not even close her little shop, since that would prove her to be an enemy of the people.

Jacques says this is the Golden Age ; but to me it seems as if hell had “opened up her gates.”

I am willing that all should be free, and not being high-born myself I can take it patiently when the nation insists that poor Clotilde shall come from her wash-tub and sit with me at my meals. The Republic says that she is my equal, and per-



haps she is. I think, however, that she is far less my equal than she was three years ago ; for then she was respectful and kind, not insolent and offensive. It makes very little difference, for my life now is just endurance and waiting. It cannot spoil our family life, for that was past all spoiling.

But I am sure it needs no gift of prophecy to see what the next generation will be. Since the Republic has made little children equal to their parents, no father can punish his child, even for a grievous fault, but all the little ones are made free to follow their own sweet wills. The nation is the mother of them all ; the nation will see to it that they grow up in ignorance and sin, we may be sure of that. I am more thankful every day for my little unknown grave and the white soul up in heaven.

It was in the early winter that Henri suddenly returned, one day when I was sitting alone, after Jacques had had one of his horrible feasts. And so overwrought was I that the sight of him seemed like the sight of one of God's strong angels, and I wept for joy. "My poor little Manon!" he said—only that ; but he took me in his arms and kissed me. And I, who had not wept for so many weary days that I had almost forgotten the blessed relief of tears—I cried like a baby on his shoulder. But when he began to question me eagerly, and with much distress, I could not answer. For first he wanted to know about that dear lady—if I had seen her, and where she was ; but I could not cease my sobbing to tell him for full five minutes, I think, nor had I the heart to give him greater sorrow.

He stood by the chimney-piece while I told my story ; and when I had finished he laid his arm upon it, and his face upon his arm, and so stood for many moments without a word. But his frame seemed to tremble and shudder, like some vessel out at sea which is overborne by the violence of the waves. After a long time—in order to draw him from himself and his own despair—I ventured to say very gently, "There is



only sorrow for all of us, Henri. The only light which breaks through comes from the far City of God. I have wished night and day that I had listened when you spoke to me of Jacques, you and Lucile. But I closed my ears; and now my life is a horror."

And that prevailed over Henri. He came and sat beside me, putting his arm about my waist, and seeking to give me comfort. I am always stronger for the touch of Henri's arm; and when he said that life was short, above all in days like these, and that God would not give me more than I was able to bear, it seemed the dearest comfort lips could have spoken to me.

I had written him about our father's disappearance, and I think he knew far more than I; for when I spoke of the matter his brow grew very dark, and I saw him clench his hand, but he did not answer me. But he *would* have all the story of the Lady Marguerite.

"She may be living yet," he said at last. "O Manon, may God grant it!"

"Henri," I said, "she was with me like a sister; and she spoke very kindly of thee," I added, doubting a little how he would take my words. "She even blushed at the mention of thy name;" for I thought it no sin, since she has already doubtless gone to a better country, to give him this small meed of consolation. And verily the swift blood which rose to his forehead gave a speedy answer.

"That was your fancy, Manon," he said in a moment. "When one is so sensitive as she, the blush comes and goes with a word or a look, or even at times for anger—that is all." And then he began to pace the floor again, and to speak hot, indignant words of all that had passed since we met before, and of those terrible September days.

"I would not serve such a band of assassins for one hour," he said, "if it were not for her, or some small service which I may do to others like her. But for that hope I would resign



and die at once. It is better to die with an innocent heart than to live with one's honour stained."

"O my dear!" I cried, "what can you or any one man do against so many?"

"One should stand for the right," said Henri shortly, "even if he stands alone."

"And die for it!" I said sobbing.

"Why, yes," said Henri vehemently; "one can die but once. Manon, if I do not speak my mind, it is not because I am afraid of them—*les scélérats*! The satisfaction of throwing down my sword and saying what I think of this accursed rule would overbear all the fear of their ghastly machine over yonder."

"Henri," I said gently, "if you throw away your life you can do nothing for her; and life is a trust."

Henri was pacing the floor in strong excitement. "I shall not throw away my life," he cried, "so long as I can keep it unstained, so long as I can keep God's curse from my heart. But, Manon," he added, standing beside me and taking my hands in his, "no man of honour can dare to live and hold an office in this country now. It has come to this, that there is no middle course, and one must choose between God and the devil. The old Christians, you remember, were bidden to offer incense to the gods. If they obeyed, they renounced their hope in the Lord; if they refused to obey, they went quickly to rest with him. One must yield with soiled hands and a lost soul, or protest and die. I will sell my life as dearly as I may. If I can keep my head on my shoulders long enough to find my lady, then blessed be God!"

"Oh, you *must*, dear Henri," I sobbed. "I shall pray night and day for this."

Before we parted Henri told me one other thing. Without any given reason he had been summoned to Paris; and had obeyed, having that sure instinct of a soldier which makes protest or question impossible. I shuddered, and thought of



Jacques, wondering if his hand had been concerned in this. But Henri assured me he had not been called to trial, and that he thought he might be placed in charge of the guard in one of the prisons.

"It would be a terrible duty, Manon," he said, "yet one which might make me of service to her and others; even king's men serve as guards sometimes. At least there shall be no *Septembriade* in my department, but over my dead body." Henri clenched his hand, and his eyes shot fire at some invisible foe.

The very next day at noon-time, much to my surprise, Jacques came home to his dinner. There was nothing unusual in his appearance; the air of neglect which is always to be noticed in his dress is the fashion with all his party. He smiled, however, when he saw me, as though we had returned to the old days of our courtship.

"Well, my dear Manon," he said, with an ugly grimace, "we have your brother back again in the bosom of the Republic. Such a patriot should not be sent so far away. He is to have service now at the Abbaye, and ample opportunity to display his loyalty."

"Jacques," I said, rising and confronting him, "have you set yourself to war against every one that I love?"

Jacques laughed. "A woman should love no one but her husband," he said; "that was *your* mistake."

"A woman who has such a husband as I have is not likely to be overcharged with love for him," I answered hastily.

I was very unwise, and proved beyond a doubt that I am far from attaining to that measure of Christian charity which my Lord requires from all who are called by his name. For I am not ignorant of this word, "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men."

I was penitent as soon as I had spoken, not because I feared Jacques's anger, for that has lost its power to move me this way or that.



"So! it stands that way, does it?" said Jacques with an oath. "You shall have ample leisure to repent those words, *mon amie*," and at this he raised his hand and struck me a blow upon the mouth, which, thank God, I was enabled to take with meekness and forbearance.

Well may I comfort myself with the words which the good pastor Leroy spoke to me when I told him to what a cruel man he had joined my life. "My child," he said, "in that country toward which we are journeying fast there is neither 'marrying nor giving in marriage.' There 'the servant is free from his master,' the wife from her husband. Yet I would to God, with St. Paul," he added, "'that ye were all even as I.'"

I talked long with him that day. I told him that all seemed black to me, and God's "ways past finding out."

"These are not *God's* ways," he answered simply.

"Why does he let so many who love him, so many noble and true souls, perish for want of help?" I questioned. "I believe with all my heart in God's goodness, but I cannot understand."

"No, we cannot understand now," he answered; "but this we know, no soul ever perished that was stayed on the Lord. No soul ever stepped out into the silence before its appointed hour. Do you think that heaven is less fair than saints have pictured it, that it should seem a cruel fate for his children to go home to God? 'In his presence is fulness of joy.' Ah, my child, to these weary eyes of mine the 'land which is very far off' is greatly to be desired, even though the way to it should lie through suffering and blood," said that dear old man.

"But so many who have perished never cared for God," said I.

"There will always be those," he answered, sighing heavily, "for whom the Lord died in vain. And woe to those evil men who weigh down their own souls day by day with the burden of other souls which they send into eternity!"



"But you told me, dear sir," I said once more, "that the sufferings of the people would purify and cleanse them. Is this cleansing?"

"I was mistaken," he answered meekly. "The blood of Christ cleanses; without that no sacrifice, no fire of suffering, will avail."

And that is true.

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XXXIII.

*A DELIVERER.*

THE hot August days of that year found Marguerite still in La Force. The streets were narrow and close about that old fortress-prison, and in those days every available corner within its walls was crowded with the prisoners of the nation. There were many aristocrats to be swept away, but the land was being rapidly purged of them. The fall of Charlotte Corday and the Girondists was followed fast by a long death-roll. The prisons were supplied so constantly that the utmost efforts of the guillotine hardly sufficed to keep them from overflowing.

In those days there seemed to be a "savour of death" in the very air men breathed. People spoke in awe-struck tones, as though the very sound of their voices, like the echo which starts the avalanche, might lure down upon themselves more swift destruction. The strangest thing of all was that the sun still shone. Nature was not in harmony with this horror of man's making. A quiet sunlight falling upon sober-looking homes, and lighting up the tangled hair of little children, seemed a weird thing when one remembered that scarcely one home among them all was free from a ghastly skeleton. The breezes of heaven as they blew freshly over the clover fields seemed redolent of blood. The very hearts of men went to be full of love for wives and little children had grown like the hearts of hungry tigers thirsting for their prey. The days were filled with murder and the nights with strange noises—



unearthly revellings—feasts of charnel-houses; while fear stalked abroad like a “horror of great darkness,” and no one dared to pity or avenge.

For there sat always the court of the nation—the *Tribunal Révolutionnaire*—dealing out its sentences of death without appeal. Whoever was summoned before that tribunal might be assured of a merciless trial and a speedy condemnation. Fouquier Tinville’s *batch* of *condamnés* never failed. Every day the circle of aristocrats in the prisons heard the roll-call of doom, and every evening there were those who knew that their last night had come.

Even Marguerite’s brave heart became silenced and full of trembling. Death hung so long suspended over her head that her nerves became weak from suspense. She tried to keep up a brave courage in the presence of others; but sometimes in the middle of the night, when all was quiet, when the stars shone softly through the bars of her prison, she hid her face in her hands, and cried out from her soul for strength to meet her doom.

There was another who suffered as keenly on her account, and that was Henri Beaupré. For his own part, too, he had to endure the pain which a brave man feels in herding with cowards—setting himself, even in ever so small a degree, on a level with them—or which a man with a true and tender heart would know in doing the behest of murderers and assassins. By standing in the background he still kept his hands clean; and he had always hope. He had been degraded to the rank of an officer of the prison-guards; but that was the post of all which he desired. For Marguerite’s sake only his life was of value, and only on prison duty could he succour her. In her cause his life, from day to day, grew to be a labour of love; and day by day, almost unconsciously, the words repeated themselves in his heart, “I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” He placed his life in hourly jeopardy with words of kindness which he dared to speak, deeds of tenderness which,



against all orders, he dared to perform for those who were in peril of their lives. And still his own life was spared.

Not having discovered Marguerite at the Abbaye, he dared not ask to be changed to another prison, lest the very effort should defeat his ends. About this time, while he was turning the matter over in his mind, and growing desperate, as every scheme seemed to fail him, he met a comrade who had served with him on the frontier. One evening, after he had set his guard, and had a few moments' breathing-space, he came upon this man at the corner of the Rue des Sts. Pères, where it joined the Rue St. Dominique. The old church of La Charité stood like a dark shadow at their right, with the pale light of a new moon falling dimly around it; and to the left, a little further, rose the towers of the old Hôtel de Rohan, like index fingers pointing back to other times.

Henri was so deeply wrapped in thought that for a moment he did not recognize this friend who spoke to him, until the other seized him by the shoulder.

"Henri Beaupré!" he said in a low tone. "Alive yet, eh?"

The voice, though muffled, was one which spoke of gentle breeding, and Henri knew at once to whom it belonged.

"Major d'Arblay!" he exclaimed. "What! back already? It is faring ill with the army in these days."

"Yes," said D'Arblay, drawing him aside into the shadows of the churchyard. "You think, probably, that I should be at my post. You can't keep *every* man in order, Beaupré, in this new France. I came, on some fair excuse, to see what they would do to Custine. I am now enjoying the favour of the Republic."

"I am sorry for that," said Henri quietly, but with an involuntary shudder.

"How so? I thought you were a better friend than that, Henri," said the other. "I took you for a true man and a kind-hearted fellow in those days when we sat over the campfires at Valmy and Jemappes."



"No honourable man can enjoy the favour of the Republic now," said Henri shortly ; "that is over."

"Let us persevere, however," said D'Arblay ; "all this will pass. My country is my country, though evil men hold the power."

"And because France is my country," said Henri defiantly, "I am not bound to uphold those who ruin her. I want no favour, not I, from such an accursed set."

"Let it rest," said D'Arblay with a restless laugh ; "that favour is fleeting. What are you doing?"

"Waiting to sell my life at a certain price," said Henri quietly. "There is only one thing for which I want to live a day longer in this forsaken city."

"And what is that?"

Henri looked straight in the other's eyes. This might be a subtle snare which should lure his hope on to its undoing ; it might be a plank put forth for the rescue of it—who could say ? Yet he never had doubted D'Arblay.

"You can trust me," said D'Arblay, as though he had read the thought. "God knows I have sins enough upon my conscience. I had a friend once who always told me the truth about them—no one brings them to my mind in these days ; but I would never betray a friend."

"No, I don't think you would," said Henri. "The one thing that I guard my life for is to save one who has been a friend to me. I know that life is always sacred—should always be guarded—yet, but for this thought, I could not serve this Republic of hell nor hold my tongue an hour."

"The Republic would not be purified, nor any lives saved, because you ceased to hold your tongue and lost your head," said D'Arblay dryly.

Henri groaned. "It is daily torture to me," he said. "It is worse than death to be obliged to live as though I countenanced these things."

"I'll warrant many a poor aristocrat blesses you every day,"



said D'Arblay lightly, "and that is something. Stop chafing so; you will have many a chance to die yet, my friend."

"Major d'Arblay, you can do me a kindness if you will," said Henri abruptly. "I want to be changed to La Force. I must find this person. Do you understand?"

"I understand," said D'Arblay. "I will help you all I can. But I think, without doubt, if this is your plan, you will not have to chafe very long over your present distasteful life; and I should not like to see your head in the basket, Henri."

Less than a week after that, however, Henri Beaupré was suddenly transferred to duty at La Force. He could hardly restrain his excitement as he entered those gloomy walls. It might be that here also disappointment would await him; it might even be that that dear head had fallen long ago.

Marguerite's heart had been heavy all the morning. Even when the prisoners were assembled in the corridor, and the semblance of merry chatting went on about her, she stood silent and weary, leaning her head against the damp stone of the entrance-way, and looking upon the scene as one would look for whom all earthly things were passed for ever. Long confinement had wrought a change in this fair lady; yet no one who loved her would have thought for a moment that it had left her less fair. With her, suffering had worked as the "refiner's fire"—cleansing every earth-stain, every fleeting shadow of evil. Her face was so transparent, her eyes so clear, that it seemed as though her soul looked through them; and when she raised them suddenly and saw Henri stand beside her, the light that shone from them overcame him. The sweetness of her smile was like a ray of heaven's sunshine let down into the dismal places of earth.

And the thought flashed suddenly upon him, "She is further than ever from me now, being nearer to the angels."

For a moment they looked in each other's eyes, and to each of them came a sense of strange quiet and assurance with the look—a sense of some strange blessing in the midst of life's



misery. She felt assured that this man would help her if he could, and he was sure that she trusted him.

And presently Marguerite left the group of merry talkers and went bravely towards him.

"Captain Beaupré," she said gently, "how did you come to be here?" And then she added with a little shudder, "You cannot be one of those fearful men who murder and destroy?"

"Oh, God forbid!" he exclaimed in much distress. "Surely you cannot think that, Lady Marguerite. I am here, in this place, for your sake, to find you—to save you if I can."

He had thought over his plans, and had laid them well. There had been ample leisure for this in the long night-watches. He had also counted the cost, and it seemed less than nothing to him. He did not tell her what it meant to save her life. Why should he? It was only the old cry of the queen's bodyguards repeated on a lower key with humbler music, "We will die; save ye the queen!"

For Henri Beaupré also there was but one queen.

"Oh, can you?" she asked tremulously, catching at this hope in the midst of her distress. "I was going to ask you if you could give me something to *die* upon—some word that is strong."

How weak and frail she seemed, with that rare spiritual look in her face and those white transparent hands!

"Every word of God is strong," he answered, bending toward her. "O dear Lady Marguerite! 'underneath are the everlasting arms.'"

"Yes, that is good," she said softly; "that must be for me, I think. I don't know why I should be such a coward"—she raised her face appealingly to him, and gave a little shiver as of pain—"the De Clairacs never were cowards—never. I have always thought I would rather die than do some other things. But I am afraid of such a terrible death."

Every trembling word appealed to his love and manhood. He longed to gather her in his arms and shield her from this



and every evil thing. The thought of the guillotine in connection with that dear head filled him with anguish. Yet he made no answer, gazing only into the eyes which she had raised to his, as if this were a land where lovers could be happy in their love! She drew insensibly closer to him; his very presence was protection.

"Are *you* never afraid to die?" she asked then wistfully. "For me, I am not afraid of going home to God, but I am afraid of the road. Are you never afraid?"

He hesitated, looking at her with tenderest pity in his eyes. "*I am a soldier*," he answered, "and have faced death so often that I am beginning to look upon him as a friend. A soldier of Jesus Christ has no cause to fear. But I will save you, Lady Marguerite."

More than one in the corridor had looked at them and turned away with a little smile. One was used to curious meetings in those days of equality and fraternity. Even a high-born lady might be forgiven for speaking with such a gallant *gendarme* as this.

"There was one other who offered to save me," said Marguerite gently; "but the conditions were too hard."

"Conditions!" he repeated in astonishment; for it seemed impossible that any one should attach conditions to such a service as that.

"It was some one whom I knew in those old days," she added simply. "He offered to save me if I would be his wife."

At this the indignant blood rushed to Henri's face, and although he asked quite calmly, "Was that such a hard condition?" yet his breath came fast while he waited for her answer.

"It was *hard*," she answered with a wonderfully sweet smile, "since this man was not the man whom I love."

Then truly there was a man whom the Lady Marguerite loved; and while Henri Beaupré had no doubt that M. de Nesle was this most blessed man, yet even with the pain which her words had brought to him came the further thought, "If



I can find this man, he better than another may help me to save her."

But when he had learned from Marguerite herself that M. de Neale was dead, the thought of M. d'Arblay presented itself as of an only alternative. For the one plan which seemed clear before him, which he thought it possible to carry out, required another hand besides his own. The days were few at best, and his decision must be quickly taken. On Tuesday he first saw the Lady Marguerite, and by Thursday his plans were all arranged for her escape. But Henri Beaupré, his safety or desires, were not counted in those plans.

Friday he would have on guard in the evening a young fellow of a docile, unsuspicious disposition, who was in love with a pretty girl of the Faubourg St. Antoine. Little persuasion would be needed to induce Gaspard to seek Nanette's society for an hour or two, and Henri would take his place in guarding the corridor. Also, by many kindly little acts of courtesy, Henri had won the heart of the turnkey's wife, who often let him rest on her best sofa, and served him with her rarest cups of tea. The turnkey also, led by her example, placed unlimited confidence in that young officer of the guard; and Henri had already learned a great deal about the arrangement of their private apartments. He knew where madame's green cloak hung when she was not using it, and also her large poke-bonnet. Every one about La Force knew that cloak and bonnet well; but it was not every one who knew where to lay his hand upon them. There was also another thing which he had learned—when the turnkey took his evening nap, which usually lasted until after midnight, the keys hung on a hook at the head of his bed.

When a man is so determined as Henri, difficulties vanish into air. It seemed a trifling matter, in his exalted state, to prepare a sleeping potion for that good man and his wife, and serve it to them on Friday evening, with some light wine, which he might seem to share with them. It seemed easier still, in



anticipation, to remove the keys from the little hook and the cloak and hat from the closet. (He had a few *louis-d'or* which would fully repay madame for the loss of them.) And after that, what could be easier than to unlock the door of Marguerite's little chamber, and to lead her through the corridor and out into the moonlight wrapped in that bonnet and cloak? Curious eyes would look lightly upon her, wondering, perhaps, what could call madame abroad at such an untimely hour; no one would challenge her. The hardest part would be, beyond a question, to send her out into the night and himself turn back alone.

That Friday evening something occurred which nerved his arm and his heart to dare the utmost. While the roll of the condemned was called, he had been standing with his eyes fixed on Marguerite, who, surrounded by a little *coterie* of friends, sat leaning wearily against one of the old stone pillars of the hall. Her eyes were downcast as she listened to the names: each one of them must mean so much to her, for all were the names of friends; and the circle grew smaller with each passing day. Suddenly, while she listened, she heard a word which sent the blood to her heart, and caused her to raise her eyes dilated with horror. She did not cry out; her terror showed itself only in a little smile of intense pathos, as she turned instinctively toward Henri. He was deadly pale, and his brow was drawn; but he turned his head away, and kept his eyes on the ground. The time was short indeed.

It was all over in a moment more. The officer with the roll withdrew from the hall, and those whose hours were numbered now fell weeping in the arms of weeping friends. And then it was that Marguerite suddenly became grateful for the sorrow which had grieved her so sorely a month before, when Gabrielle had been removed to the Abbaye. There was one less to mourn for her.

She turned again toward that silent *gendarme*, who stood with downcast eyes and the look of anguish on his face.



"It is all over now," she said in a whisper, going close to his side. "Thank you for the kindness of your thought. And oh, pray for me, when the hour comes, that God will take the terror away and make me brave to die!"

His face worked with strong emotion; but little did she think that when that hour came it would be he who stood in need of prayers from her, not she of his.

"Be watching for me at midnight," he answered; "and keep silence. God will help us yet."

That same day Henri had already gone in search of D'Arblay, whom, happily for his errand, he found alone, and who received him with open arms, as became a patriot nobleman toward a man of the people.

Without any preliminaries, Henri proceeded to thank him for the aid which he had rendered.

"Oh! that," said D'Arblay—"that was a *bagatelle*, my friend; my days for granting favours are numbered, I fear."

"I have accomplished my purpose," said Henri briefly; "I have found her."

"Her? ah yes, the friend whom you wished to save."

"The Lady Marguerite de Clairac," said Henri slowly, fixing his eyes on D'Arblay.

D'Arblay started with an exclamation of anger. "What do you know of her, *citoyen*?" he asked; "and by what right do you bring these personal matters to me?"

"I think you are a man of honour," Henri replied, "or I should not have brought them. If I risk my life to save her, are you content to help me without condition? Will you leave her free when saved to follow her pleasure?"

"You mean that you take me for a rival," said D'Arblay bitterly. "Well, so I am; what then?"

"There is no question of rivalry," said Henri. "I am no more to the Lady Marguerite than any other."

"Is it possible that she is condemned?" said D'Arblay.

"She will die in the morning unless we do something," said



Henri. "I have arranged my plans to set her safely outside of La Force, if you will do the rest."

"Why, Henri," said his friend, overcome with astonishment, "it will be death for you unless you fly with her."

"Yes," Henri answered quietly; "I have thought of all that. But if I am away when the guard is changed, the whole matter will come to light much sooner; and, moreover, an innocent fellow with a mother would have to bear the penalty—he and others perhaps."

"Yes, you have thought it out well," said D'Arblay with a scornful laugh. "You will sacrifice yourself for the sake of a poor wretch who will probably die next week at the best; and with the sole hope of saving a lady who will not so much as thank you. You are a fool; take your chance for life while you can."

"It will not be the first time that life has been given for a woman," said Henri with quiet decision. "All that I ask of you, M. d'Arblay, is your oath as a man of honour that if I give her into your hands you will do your utmost to take her across the frontier—that you will do it without condition, without lien upon her freedom."

"Yes, I will swear that," said D'Arblay shortly, "if you *will* be such a fool. Over the frontier is where I myself most earnestly desire to be. I must find excuse for a passport."

"You must wait then an hour after midnight, at the corner of the Rue Culture Ste. Catherine and the Rue du Parc Royal. It is better not to have a carriage, as that would arouse the curiosity of the driver. Stroll slowly here and there, and watch. If I cannot bring her and return, she will come alone. You must wait, if you wait all night."

"I will wait," said D'Arblay shortly, and then he grasped Henri's hand. "I cannot bear to see you sacrifice yourself, Beaupré," he said, and there were tears in his eyes.

"God reward you, as you deal with her," said Henri.

"I will deal with you and with her as an honest man and a friend," said the other in return. And so they parted.



XXXIV.

*THE END.*

WITH the sun of that Friday afternoon Marguerite's hopes were also setting. It had come at last—that terrible moment to which for months she had looked forward. This spectre which had dogged her footsteps had now come close and stared her in the face. Her heart threw itself into one brief prayer, “Lord, help me—strengthen me!” not even “Lord, deliver me!” Over and over she repeated the words—over and over, until a sense of quiet settled upon her soul. Heaven seemed to come nearer, and she had a thought that God’s angels were about her in that narrow room, according to his promise. The twilight drew on quickly in those shaded towers, and one by one the prisoners settled to their restless sleep. For herself, she had no thought of sleeping. She lay quiet, with wide eyes and clasped hands, while the night brought her visions. She remembered Henri’s promise, but not with any shadow of expectation; and whenever the thought of the morning crossed her mind, it came with a premonition of horror.

The great clock had struck eleven, when the regular, monotonous tread in the corridor was changed. She had a fancy that she recognized this newer step, and the fancy brought a sense of comfort to her heart. After some minutes that also ceased, and the dead silence troubled her. She was not quite sure how long after, the lock of her chamber was softly turned, and, rising slowly, she stood face to face with Henri Beaupré. He wrapped madame’s cloak about her, and drew her forth into



the corridor before he spoke a word. Then, "I only am here," he said; "do not be alarmed. There is only a little while, and much to be done."

But, alas! even though the time be short, a woman must have her say; and through the terror of the night this woman had had many thoughts and questions. Even in the face of the guillotine they must be answered.

"Henri," she said in a whisper, laying her hand on his arm and looking up in his face, "why do you try to save me? why is my life better than another? Why have you searched so far and hazarded so much for *me*? Is not life sweet to you also?"

He stood looking steadfastly down upon her—fiercely perhaps—for his soul was tried, and his breath came hard and fast. And when he spoke, it was as if he were constrained against his will and honour to speak the thing that he would not.

"I think, dear lady," he said, "that I have answered that question more than once at the risk of your anger. My life is only dear to me for the purpose of serving you."

"*Tell me—still,*" she persisted, in a low voice.

His lips parted, the answer to her question seeming to tremble upon them; then he closed them with a defiant look, as though he disdained to ask even the largess of a smile for the gift of his life. What need to trouble her with the memory of his love now that all was over? But his eyes flashed the truth which his lips refused to utter; and taking her answer so, she drew closer to him in the dim lamplight and laid her hand tenderly on his—"Is it because you love me, Henri?"

Henri's face grew radiant at her question. The joy and the fixed purpose in it made it not unlike the face, as we might conceive it, of some strong conquering angel. "God only knows how well, sweet heart!" he answered eagerly. "You have been my saint and my love—yes, all the world to me—from the first day that you spoke to me."



"Your *saint*!—oh no," she said tremulously; "but your love—yes, always, Henri, because I love you!"

She drew closer and raised her face to his, and with a low cry of joy he caught her in his strong young arms and pressed her close to his heart. And truly, in that moment, neither of them cared whether it were life or death that came to them; for "love is strong as death," and conquers all things.

To Henri it seemed like the magic effect of some password in an old fairy tale. Yesterday he had not dreamed even of pressing her hand as a poor return for his life, or of feeling the breath from her sweet lips upon his face. Now he held her close in his arms, and her lips were raised to his returning his passionate kisses. By the power of that password she was goddess and saint no longer, but a loving mortal woman, whose heart beat lovingly against his own.

And being also mortal, he could not but allow that even the saintly lady of his vision had never been so wonderfully dear as this trembling woman who loved him.

He looked at her as a starving man would look—seeing visions of golden fruit which he may not gather; for in the first joy of his gain was hidden the shadow of his coming loss. While he held her so, speaking tender words which he had not thought to speak in any woman's ear, Henri had ceased for a moment to think of the urgency of his task. Life and liberty to *himself* weighed so little in the scale that he had almost lost sight of the fact that her life was dearer than his own. This earthly paradise which he had never hoped to reach seemed just before him with the gate ajar.

"God be praised!" he said softly at last; "and blessed be loss and pain and death, since only these could ever have brought you to my heart!"

"O my love!" she answered, with a little shudder, "do not speak of death. What is death? If we die, we shall die together now, and heaven is very near."

Alas! it was death in such companionship which had become



glorified to Marguerite. Not death for one, and death in life for the other.

"Sweet heart, you must not die," he answered quickly. "Put this hat on and wrap the cloak closely about you, and follow me."

She obeyed him silently, but with trembling fingers and a strange foreboding at her heart. The clock was just striking the hour of twelve when he led her past the turnkey's room and to the entrance gate.

"Now go on bravely, and alone," he said, "as though you were *madame*. No one will challenge you. Walk slowly toward the Rue Ste. Catherine, and I will try to follow. If I do not, some one will meet you at the corner of the Rue du Parc Royal who will put you in safety."

"But *you*," she said, turning back in the very sight of the guard; "I will not go without you."

"I will follow—O my God!—I will follow," said Henri in despair. "I entreat you not to linger."

He turned away from her with a jesting remark—such as he was wont to make to *madame* herself—in a louder key, and with an air of indifference returned to the corridor.

Marguerite went forward fearfully, not daring to look behind her. If those whom she passed could have known how *madame* trembled, they would not have regarded her with such careless, indifferent eyes. A little past the prison she lingered in the shadow of an old churchyard, and as Henri had followed her at once by another exit, she had not long to wait. Guessing little of the sad parting which lay close before them, Marguerite's heart leaped with joy as she saw him coming.

In Henri's mind, however, the thought of that parting was most distinct of all; and for this reason he lingered a moment in the old churchyard to take her again in his arms. This much would he allow himself in exchange for life—the blessing of a last adieu.

"This is farewell for a time," he whispered; "and may God



“bless you, and bless you for ever, my ‘joy and my crown’!” His rapid kisses took away her breath, and his words robbed her of the little strength which still remained to her. She looked up quickly, with a protest on her lips; but before she could speak it, he was already hurrying her forward—almost carrying her, in fact—to the spot where D’Arblay waited.

True to his promise, he was ready with his own private carriage not many steps away; and Henri, seeing this, spoke to her again:—

“Here is M. d’Arblay, another friend of yours. He has promised upon his oath to take you safely over the frontier.”

Marguerite shivered, and a low moan escaped her lips.

“Citoyenne Marguerite,” said D’Arblay quickly, “upon my honour, as a gentleman, I will do my utmost, without conditions.”

Conditions weighed lightly with Marguerite then. She thought only of her lover, and the terror at her heart almost paralyzed her tongue. A deadly faintness overcame her, and her heart for a moment stopped beating.

“O Henri! you surely will come with me,” she moaned, as he gently loosened the hands which clung to his arm.

“If it is possible,” he answered gently, “I will follow—will meet you at Soissons to-morrow night. Be sure I will do my utmost; and God bless you!”

Her eyes were blinded then, and the world reeled before her. She was conscious of saying out—too loud perhaps—“I had rather die—I had rather die with you, Henri!” and that was all she remembered. For at that moment the whole truth seemed to shine in upon her soul, and she knew that it must be only this—death with Henri or life without him now.

The next thing of which she was conscious was this—she sat in that carriage of M. d’Arblay’s facing him, with her head resting against the cushions, and the outside world was passing rapidly before them. She raised her head and looked out with wide eyes dilated with horror. At first in her bewilderment



she was silent; then she bent forward and laid her hand on the arm of the man who sat fronting her.

"Take me back," she said in a stifled voice. "I had rather go back and die."

"*Mon amie*, do not be afraid," said D'Arblay quietly; "little as you trust me, I am not without honour. I will keep my oath to that brave fellow come what may: you shall be safe."

"Ah," she said despairingly, "it is not that—you will not understand! *He* is not safe—he will die; and I also prefer to die."

He spoke some reassuring words, reminding her of Henri's appointment to meet them at Soissons; and presently, from the very hopelessness of her suit, she sunk into a passive silence.

All through the morning she watched with eager eyes. The sun rose in a cloudless sky. Just beyond the great city the grass was fresh and green, and the dew lay softly upon it, while in the hedgerows little birds were singing. M. d'Arblay had a passport which even in those days was not gainsaid: he was bound on business for the Republic, and madame, his wife, accompanied him. Marguerite had no curiosity in regard to these little matters; she listened to all the controversies which occurred as though she were not concerned in them. She even found herself wondering once or twice at M. d'Arblay's coolness and self-possession, as though she were looking on at a comedy with which she had nothing to do. Once or twice she slept from very weariness; but her eyes at other times constantly watched the road, and grew intent at the sound of every hoof-beat.

"Do you think he has started yet?" she asked in a whisper, as the sun rose higher and the houses became few and scattered. It seemed to her as though they had travelled a century and Soissons never would be reached.

"Truly I hope so," he answered earnestly, but his eyes were turned away.



After a little she asked again, "Will there be any hope that he will reach Soissons, do you think, Monsieur d'Arblay?"

"While we live there is always hope," he answered briefly.

"O Monsieur d'Arblay, tell me—why did he go back at all?" she pleaded.

"He was responsible for your flight; he would not leave the risk of danger to another."

Then she was silent for a long time, and hope died out in her heart. M. d'Arblay also had had much to think of since they started, and some puzzling things had grown clearer to him. And so, as hour after hour passed, and Soissons had been reached and left in the distance, and her strange, wistful eyes looked at him, though her lips were mute, he bent forward, and asked very gently, "What shall I tell you?"

"The truth," she answered, in an unnatural, constrained voice. "I love that man, Monsieur d'Arblay; I shall never love any other man—never! Now tell me the truth."

"This is the truth," he answered. "My dear Marguerite, when the brave Citoyen Beaupré said that he would meet you at Soissons *if possible*, he knew it to be impossible. From the vengeance of the Revolutionary Tribunal there is no escape. Henri Beaupré has given his life for yours, my friend."

Yes, Marguerite had already seen this truth and put it from her; she knew it now. She gave no sign—she did not faint or sob, nor even tremble. The greatness of the sacrifice possessed her soul and filled it with awe and tenderness. Life was short, oh, very short! she would be sure to follow soon. The road made little difference perhaps; neither of them could miss the way to the heavenly City. And while she had been asking her questions foolishly—groping feebly after the desire of her heart—watching with eager eyes to see if God's providence would not be tenderer than her fears, Henri's trial and condemnation were already over. Marguerite might have had a surer prescience of what would follow if she could have seen the look of agony on his face as he stood that night and watched her out



of sight. In that last look lay the bitterness of death to him; nothing worse could come after.

As the last sound of the wheels died away he turned and walked with a quick step back to La Force—to the trial which awaited him. And that was the end—his mission. The task for which he had nerved his strength and endured such distasteful service was accomplished now. In all his thoughts concerning it he had never, even dimly, foreseen what the reality would be. It had never occurred to him that such a prize as the love of Marguerite might lie within his very grasp. With this blessed thought in remembrance death became doubly glorified.

His trial was not delayed. The "justice of the people" did not tarry in those days. Since he had been guilty of a deed in defiance of the Republic, the Republic was swift to condemn him. And since this deed was confessed, and quite patent to all men, there was no need of evidence. Fouquier Tinville's tribunal was an active one, and the condemned had speedy shriving.

"Citoyen Beaupré, are you a good patriot?"

"I am, so help me, God!"

His head was thrown back with a look of pride, his dark eyes flashed indignation at the man who questioned him; indignation, not for himself, but for the frightful mockery of justice—for the myriads of righteous souls who were daily hurled into eternity from thence.

"Did you, on the night of the ninth of October, aid the *citoyenne* Marguerite Clairac to escape from La Force?"

"I did."

And so the sentence which followed was as speedy as the trial.

It was not only the surety of innocence which kindled the light in Henri's eyes when that sentence was spoken, and which gave the glad spring to his step as he turned away. He was dying for his love. Not only that: *for his love*, perhaps, he



need not have died—he was to die for his honour and for God.

“He has the face of a hero,” some one whispered who saw him mount the scaffold—not a face of daring and indifference, such as so many wore in his place, but a face full of steady faith and a noble purpose.

It was some time after this, on a dreary winter day, that Manon, turning listlessly about the papers in her little writing-table, came upon the last fragment which she had written after the arrest of Marguerite; and then, being drawn to it by tender memories, she began absently to read over her scattered record of the last few years, staying herself now and then with a low moan and a prayer upon her lips. Then, with tears in her eyes, she hurriedly took her pen and sat down to write a few pages more. After this she carefully sealed the record and laid it away.

“Some day Félice may read it in memory of me,” she said.

And this was what she wrote in conclusion:—

“I have been looking over the record of those thoughts and deeds which I hoped to pass on to my children, and now I find that they were never very wise. At the best, one sees things ‘through a glass darkly’ now. Some day we shall see more clearly. All that rests now is the surety that God still reigns, and that, though men ‘have sought out many inventions,’ and think they have usurped his power, the throne is his own.

“This makes me think of the most terrible thing of all—God has been cast out from among us. No, never that! God himself, blessed be his name! can never really be cast out. His name has been dishonoured and his worship forbidden; but that cannot touch himself, more than the clouds can touch the sun. ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away,’ but God remains. Man’s foolishness cannot even wear out his patience, I suppose. If this people had lived thousands of years ago, perhaps he



would have blasted them with fire and brimstone. Now he looks on and waits. I wonder how the deeds of the past three years have seemed to watching angels. Once, long ago, 'it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth:' could that time show anything worse than we in France have shown? 'The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah waxed great before the Lord,' and he sent his angel to destroy them; yet we are told that 'it shall be more tolerable in the judgment' even for those wicked cities, than for men who scorn his gracious offer and will not hear his word.

"We have cast out his teachers, destroyed his altars, have burned holy things with fire, and have set up mortal women to be worshipped in his place. If such blasphemy does not call down his consuming fire, is it not because there is greater retribution in store?

"O my God, let me not cast in my lot with these! I loathe the ground, wet with my father's and my brother's blood. I am only a child of the good God; I have no other heritage. Since all are chosen now to martyrdom—young women even, and little children—I only pray that I, too, may go quickly where there is clearer light than in this murky atmosphere.

"Annette lives with us now, but she is no comfort to me. She wanders abroad, gazing into everything, even decks herself in white to follow after the goddess of Reason.

"Her heart is dead, I think, for she looked on with dry eyes at the death of her friend Charlotte, and danced the *carmagnole* the evening after. Yet I am sure the memory of her lady has weighed upon her mind, for she has often muttered her name in sleep.

"For Henri only I am glad. I had far rather have him dead, with his honour unstained, than living on like others all around me, learning to tolerate things which should be abhorred. I had rather also that he died a brave man than that he should have gone with his lady, leaving another to suffer in



his stead. And the Lady Marguerite is richer than I; for 'treasure that is laid up in heaven' is kept safely, and friends who are gone to heaven never change or fail. It is very beautiful that she should have loved him. I know that there is no marrying in that blessed country; yet it seems as though, in some way, delightful things which are only suggested here and left in incompleteness may be brought to some sort of blessed fulfilment hereafter. And her love made his death beautiful.

"They let me see him once before he died. I think my tears and great distress wrung this small favour from my husband. All that I knew of the matter came through Jacques. The day after the Lady Marguerite escaped he came to me full of anger and excitement.

" 'Well, *citoyenne*,' he said, 'your brother has brought his treason and foolishness to a consummation at last.'

" 'O Jacques! what do you mean?' I cried, catching him by the arm.

" 'He has been setting free that cursed aristocrat, that friend of whom you were so fond, who should have died this morning,' said my husband sneeringly.

" 'The Lady Marguerite!—is she safe?' I cried.

" 'Oh no; we shall have her before nightfall,' said Jacques quietly. 'But he will die all the same—the fool! If he had to do such a desperate deed, he should have had the sense to make off with himself.'

"After which I wept so bitterly, and begged and pleaded for such a length of time, that Jacques finally consented that I should see my brother.

"The time was very short when they led me to him, for he was to go to his death in an hour. Everything is short in these days.

"It seemed to me, however, that he might well have been going to his own wedding feast, he looked so brave and strong, with such a glad light in his eyes.



"I choked back my tears that I might not, through any word or look of mine, unman him at the last; for I knew I should have, if God chose, many years in which to weep and break my heart, when no one could be unmanned by my weeping. So I prayed that for those few minutes I might be calm.

" 'Henri,' I said, taking his hand and kissing it, 'you and Félice are all that I have in the world; I hope God will let us follow soon.'

" 'Manon dear, if God would take you gently,' he said, 'that would be well. But do not pray for such a death as mine, dear heart, for either you or the little one.'

"And then I asked him if he were glad to die, and he said, 'Life has become very sweet since her love has filled it, Manon. As for death itself, I care not for it. Death is but going to the Lord: the road is short, and he will give me strength. I could not use my life better than to give it for her.'

"Yesterday I had a letter from the Lady Marguerite, the first word that I have heard from her since Henri died. She says: 'I am with my father, Manon, and safe from danger; but I do not prize my liberty. Little which makes life worth the living is left; while all things—Christ and heaven, and my dear queen and Henri—are on the other side. O my little Manon! sometimes I think, if death had come to me then, by Henri's side, it would have been better so. But death comes to each of us alone; we cannot go to heaven in each other's arms—that would be so easy—but as I have heard you say, dear, in your plaintive voice, "we can each depart in the arms of the dear Lord," which is better.

" 'Everything on earth seems to be over for me now, Manon. Do not think that I can ever forget. Although I have escaped the guillotine, the Revolution has done its utmost for me—no Reign of Terror could touch me now. I had found my hero, one who, like an angel of God, would stand between me and



death ; and I have lost him. It makes no difference in one's thoughts of a hero, Manon, whether he be prince or peasant—of the people or of the blood royal. A hero is a hero everywhere, and heroes are always of royal blood, I think, in the sight of God.'

"And when I told Annette that the Lady Marguerite was safe, two little words—strange ones upon her lips—escaped, I think against her will : she said, 'Thank God !' "

THE END.



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